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# The Rise and Fall of German Film-making

by FRANCIS KOVAL

*In a series of articles that we are publishing with the collaboration of Dr Manvell, Director of the British Film Academy, the first group deals with countries in which film-making has for some time been 'indigenous' in the sense of reflecting the national life. Of this group five have already appeared: on film-making in France, Britain, the United States, Scandinavia and Italy*

It is only too obvious that everywhere in the world film-making—like any other creative activity of human beings—is a function of a country's social development and of a nation's mental make-up. In no film-producing country, however, is the close connection between the social conditions of a given period and the pictures produced in that period so self-evident and striking as in Germany.

If it is true that the political fate of a country is to a great extent determined by geographical factors (and it may not be accidental that the concept of "Geopolitik" came to birth in Germany), it is equally true that Germany's geographical position at the crossroads of Europe and her resulting political development in the last fifty years were reflected with amazing clarity both in the most outstanding products of her studios and in the great mass of mediocre entertainment films made simply to suit the not particularly refined taste of the public in general.

This fact is of paramount importance not only because the indigenous films had a certain influence on the German mind and were judged abroad as an emanation of the national spirit, but also because many achievements of German film-making have profoundly influenced creative personalities of other countries, and the German contribution to technical and artistic progress in this field has become an essential factor in the context of the world's film production.

When trying to analyse the spiritual values and mental attitudes of a whole ethnic group one cannot, of course, be too careful in avoiding traps of easy generalization. There is, however, no great risk of exaggeration in revealing one red thread running at all times through the texture of the German cinema irrespective of the actual phase of artistic development. It consists in a long series of films born of a nationalist spirit, inspired by primitive patriotism, glorifying military power or

contrasting the corruption and decadence of other nations with Germany's chivalry and purity. To this series belongs the whole string of pictures dealing with Frederick the Great (as a rule amazingly well portrayed by the talented actor, Otto Gebühr): *Fridericus Rex* (UFA, 1922), *The Flute Concert of Sans Souci* (1930), *The King's Dancer* (1932), *The Anthem of Leuthen* (1935); and pseudo-historical films like *Königin Luise* (1927), *Waterloo* (1929), *York* (UFA, 1931), *Die Elf Schillschen Offiziere* (1926 & 1932), *Der Schwarze Husar* (1932), *Luise, Queen of Prussia* (1931), *Trenck* (1932).

This list of titles chosen at random leads straight to the war and propaganda pictures produced under Hitler, such as *Ohm Krüger*, *Titanic*, or *Baptism of Fire*, to name but a few.

Rated as first-class box-office hits at home, most of those nationalistic epics have never been shown outside Germany, although some of them were cinematically not uninteresting. If we mention them at the very beginning, it is only in order to provide background information and to absolve us from the duty of referring repeatedly to samples of this genre at every turning point of German screen history.

As a famous writer once pointed out, every nation under the sun has the right occasionally to appear foolish through exaggerated patriotism—which obviously has validity also in the domain of the Seventh Art—but the Germans undoubtedly abuse that right.

Some historians of the cinema refuse to recognize anything worthy of note in German development before the year 1918. They overlook Paul Wegener's first version of *Der Student von Prag* which became an artistic event just forty years ago, in 1913. "This screenplay", wrote a critic then, "represents the first turn towards the refinement of the cinema and the elevation of the mentally decaying public to a higher level." The subse-





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(Above) *The Student of Prague* (1913) was a macabre fantasy which foreshadowed 'expressionist' developments characteristic of later German films. (Below) *Fridericus Rex* (1922) initiated a long series of nationalist films, many of them dealing with the life of Frederick II of Prussia



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*From the author*

Such fervently patriotic films as these, which helped to restore Germany's pride after her defeat in World War I, continued to be produced until the rise to power of Adolf Hitler. (Above) Otto Gebühr as the young Blücher wearing Hussar uniform in Waterloo (1929). This film, directed by Paul Czinner, was simultaneously projected on three screens, and was thus a forerunner of modern 'wide screen' experiments. (Right) Bismarck (1925) was the last of a succession of films about the great Chancellor, who is here shown standing by the tomb of his old Emperor, Wilhelm I



*From the author*





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*UFA, the great film combine for production and exhibition, was founded just before the end of World War I. Its first great international success was Madame du Barry (Passion), through which a rising young director, Ernst Lubitsch, became known abroad. It starred Pola Negri, seen here as Madame du Barry at the guillotine*



quent fame of this picture, which counts among the early classics now, has confirmed this view.

At about the same time the first appearance of Henny Porten—the first star and an integral part of the German cinema in the years to come—should be noted, particularly because of the long-forgotten but highly significant incident that attracted the public's attention to her personality. Fan letters began to pour into the office of the Oskar Messter Film Company after Henny's first appearance in what was then termed a "long feature film" in which she played the part of a blind girl. Few people remember that the story for this picture called *The Love-Life of the Blind* was supplied by Henny's sister Rosa. Its appeal to the public was probably due to the fact that an Institution for the Blind was situated directly opposite the Porten home and the achievement of the two girls—idea and acting—was the direct result of careful observation and of the emotional impact of human suffering on the sisters' impressionable minds.

This incident would not be worth reporting perhaps if it were not for the moral contained therein, a moral that also supplies an explanation for the decline of the German cinema since 1933: sincerity and truth are an essential element in films aspiring at something more than mere box-office success.

These qualities were hardly the key-note of Richard Oswald's so-called *Aufklärungs-Filme*, with which he set out from 1917 onwards to "enlighten" the nation on the dangers of venereal diseases, prostitution, homosexuality and similar scourges of indubitable box-office attraction. But these comparatively slick pictures deserve a mention because they were characteristic of the mood of a nation demoralized by defeat, misery and the collapse of a whole concept of life; a nation seeking forgetfulness in easy pleasures and irresponsible living. Another feature of these films typical of the German approach was their pretension to be "strictly scientific" which was stressed by the use of such a popular name as Professor

Magnus Hirschfeld, a forerunner in a sense of Dr Kinsey.

Very soon, however, uncoordinated individual efforts were brought under control through the creation of a framework for organization on a large scale. Out of the wartime propaganda organization BUFA (Bild Und Film-Amt) at the beginning of 1918 the famous government-sponsored UFA (initials standing for "Universal Film, Aktiengesellschaft") was born. Its foundation is generally regarded as the most important milestone marking the tortuous road of the German cinema, and in fact there is abundant justification for this view in the galaxy of illustrious names united as it were under the UFA flag,

*Henny Porten and Emil Jannings in Ann Boleyn (1920). Directed by Lubitsch, it was one of UFA's series of historical pageants with elaborate sets and supporting crowds*

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The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari, directed by Robert Wiene, featured Conrad Veidt and Werner Krauss. Sets designed in the German expressionist style symbolized the hallucinations of a madman

and in the remarkable number of films which in the course of years have made this name a household word at home and abroad.

UFA's capital of 20,000,000 marks (£1,000,000) was in part (8,000,000 marks) supplied by the Reich, and several leading film companies were from the outset affiliated to the new firm which also took over the large German assets of the Danish Nordisk Film. The direct descent from the War Ministry's BUFA was clearly noticeable, among other things through the great number of former officers (many of whom insisted on using their military titles even in the studio) in high executive positions. The smooth efficiency of the company's business methods and its resourcefulness in finding the right kind of people for specific tasks can probably be attributed to these executives' useful General Staff training which also resulted in the strict observance of the principle of not interfering with specialists and allowing them responsibility.

UFA had, of course, the advantage of owning not only the studios of Neu-Babelsberg and Tempelhof, but also the largest German chain of front-rank cinemas. Even so, it was

proof of astounding vitality and business acumen that by 1921 the new concern managed to absorb two more leading film companies with a capital of 30,000,000 marks. The German cinema was advancing now with seven-league boots, and soon the outside world began to take notice.

The first international success (released abroad as *Passion*) was Ernst Lubitsch's *Madame du Barry* whose première in 1919 was used with supreme showmanship for the inauguration of UFA's biggest cinema, the "UFA-Palast Am Zoo". It was followed by a whole series of historical pageants which astounded the world with elaborate sets of such magnitude (for *Ann Boleyn* Lubitsch in 1920 had a replica of the Tower of London built in the studio grounds!) and such numbers of crowd-artists as were never used by European film-makers before.

To this category belong the Lubitsch films *Sumurun* (*One Arabian Night*) and *The Loves of Pharaoh* (1921) as well as Buchovietski's *Danton* and Joe May's 20,000,000-mark epic *The Indian Tomb*, produced in the same year.

Whatever view one may take of these



naïvely pompous works judging them in retrospect, it must be remembered that all contemporary reviewers were unanimous in praising their "sense of authenticity and historical realism". And as Lewis Jacobs justly remarks in his *American Film*, when admiring Lubitsch's camera-work, "it was revolutionary in those days to tilt a camera toward the sky or turn it toward an arabesque mosaic in a floor, and to see the backs of a crowd was unorthodox. . . ."

The German cinema had, of course, the good fortune of profiting by the experience and inspiration of talented theatrical producers like Max Reinhardt (Lubitsch, Murnau, Paul Leni, Karl Grune were his disciples or collaborators) and in utilizing the skill and enthusiasm of such outstanding actors and actresses as Paul Wegener, Werner Krauss, Emil Jannings, Conrad Veidt and Fritz Kortner, Pola Negri, Henny Porten and Liane Haid (the latter, for instance, playing the title part in *Lady Hamilton*, produced in 1921). The fame acquired by German films is to a great extent due to their artistic

achievements.

However, as the film historian Siegfried Krakauer ably puts it: "In most important German post-war films introspection outweighed the extrovert tendency. Influenced not so much by Lubitsch's pseudo-realistic *Passion* as by Wegener's fantastic *Student of Prague*, these films reflected major events in emotional depths with an intensity that transformed customary surroundings into strange jungles."

This attitude came prominently to the fore in *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919, directed by Robert Wiene, although originally assigned to Fritz Lang) which has since acquired world fame as a classic of the screen, and at the time opened the period of expressionism in silent films thus inaugurating a new and original trend in which German leadership was undeniable.

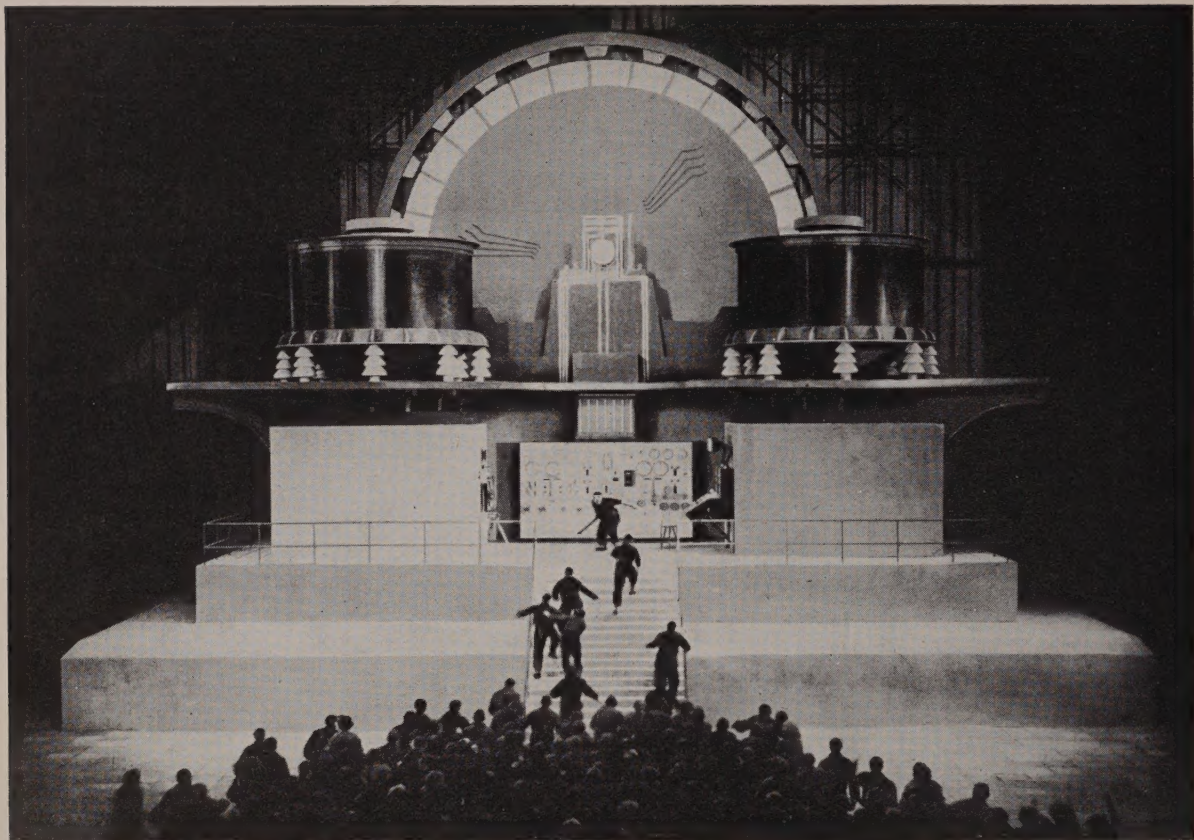
To catch the essence of the expressionist style it is perhaps best to repeat Carl Hauptmann's words that it had the function of characterizing the phenomena on the screen as phenomena of the soul. The perfect co-

German film-makers developed a technique for rendering psychological effects. A shot from *The Last Laugh* (1925) shows how an old man, degraded in his work, imagines his neighbours' mockery

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(Above) One of the great spectacular films from the German studios of the 1920s was *Metropolis* (1926), made by Fritz Lang, whose early training as an architect led him to produce films using vast sets and carefully rehearsed crowd-scenes. *Metropolis* showed the revolt of workers against a future master-race of employers who keep them in slavery within an enormous mechanized city underground. (Left) *Vaudeville* (1924), on the contrary, turned away from the film of fantasy and spectacle for which German studios were internationally famous, and helped to develop a more realistic movement; human psychology became the most important element, even though the situations in which the characters were placed were often melodramatic. E. A. Dupont, the director of *Vaudeville*, was concerned with emotional complications among trapeze artistes, two of them played by Emil Jannings and Lya de Putti



ordination of settings, players, lighting and action are symptomatic of that style and amount to what Paul Rotha calls "studio constructivism". A Frenchman trying once to express his admiration for the Caligari film, called it "as fascinating and abstruse as the German soul". He was certainly not far off the mark, and that is perhaps why this silent film, nightmarish and far removed from sober reality, appears still as a stirring absorbing spectacle even today.

Even if the two subsequent pictures made by Wiene in the same vein—*Genuine* and *Raskolnikoff*, adapted from Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*—did not quite reach the level of his masterpiece, other directors were not slow in following in his footsteps and evolving his ideas.

Lupu Pick, when shooting in 1921 his remarkable *Scherben* (*Shattered*), clearly proved that he had learned how to heighten dramatic effects by means of lighting, sets and camera-angles used the expressionist way. Three years later Karl Grune combined in his very controversial *The Street* Lupu Pick's stark realism confined to scenes of action, with the weird effects of expressionist décors obviously patterned on Wiene's 'Caligariism'. His theme of a respectable bourgeois dragged into the gutter was to reappear later in *Blue Angel*. Worth remembering for technical reasons, incidentally, is Grune's later picture *The Brothers Schellenberg* in which perfect use of the "split screen" device allowed Conrad Veidt to play the double role of the two brothers.

Fritz Lang and F. W. Murnau became at that time the most important exponents of integral expressionism, presumably because it offered them possibilities of artistic expression which corresponded somehow to their temperament and taste. The mixture of poetic romanticism and dreamlike fantasy in Fritz Lang's *Destiny* (called in German *Der müde Tod*), with Lil Dagover in the principal part, gave rise in the early twenties to a general enthusiasm that spread to all the capitals of Europe. It also increased Lang's reputation to such an extent that he could proceed with his expensive project of *The Nibelungen* series, requiring lavish sets, enormous numbers of extras and an excessively long shooting time. It is interesting to remember that in accordance with the principles of expressionism not a single scene of those two overwhelming pictures was shot outside the studios, so as to avoid the risk of a natural setting interfering with the harmony of "studio constructivism".

The result was that the French film writer, Emile Vuillerméz, referred to the finished product as "the only picture known to me that does not contain a single metre which could be called mediocre or indifferent".

To this group also belong films like Paul Leni's *Waxworks* (in which incidentally the main role of the young poet was played by William Dieterle, today a Hollywood director of note), Berthold Viertel's *The Wig* (permeated with an atmosphere reminiscent of *The Tales of Hoffmann*) or the 1926 version of *The Student of Prague* starring Conrad Veidt.

A more formidable contribution still was brought to the expressionist school by Murnau who started with pictures like *The Hunchback and the Dancer* and *Janus-Head* (inspired by the Jekyll and Hyde story, and starring Conrad Veidt), achieved an incredible impact with *Nosferatu, the Vampire* (*Dracula*), and crowned the series of his successes with *The Last Laugh* (1925) acclaimed as a masterpiece everywhere and called, for instance, by the film historian, Dr Oskar Kalbus, "an absolute work of art" and "a veritably German film of extraordinary unity". The story of the old hotel porter (played by Emil Jannings) who shrinks into insignificance when divested of the splendour of his uniform is, in fact, told so dramatically in entirely visual terms that the director could completely dispense with explanatory titles—an achievement of first importance. *The Last Laugh*, however, marks the end of the expressionist school and the transition to the not less significant period of realism.

The subtle blend of the two styles is perhaps best visible in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* which conquered the screens of the world in a flash when it was released in 1927 and astounded everybody by revealing the practically unlimited possibilities of the cinema in the hands of skilled technicians with artistic integrity. The way in which Lang handled the masses of slave-workers in this memorable film must have deeply impressed Adolf Hitler: he is said to have tried to win Lang's collaboration after having seen *Metropolis*—but in vain.

The most outstanding and most characteristic work of the realist period is E. A. Dupont's *Variété* (*Vaudeville*), the dynamically told story of emotional complications between three trapeze artistes, beautifully acted by Emil Jannings, Lya de Putti and Warwick Ward (today a producer with Associated British in London).

Credit for it—as for many other UFA films





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*Kameradschaft* (1931), made by G. W. Pabst, Germany's greatest director in the period before Hitler came to power, showed the basic comradeship of former enemies after a mining disaster on the Franco-German frontier

mentioned—is also due to Eric Pommer who supervised the production. As a matter of fact, the contribution of this extraordinary man to the resounding fame of German films between the two wars is beyond any assessment. Occupying a key position in the UFA front-office he combined the shrewd mind of a business man with the uncanny flair of a born impresario. If it were not for his courage and progressive thought, Robert Wiene, for example, would never have had the chance of making his *Dr Caligari*.

Those who consider *Vaudeville* the swansong of the silent films' "golden age" in Germany perhaps remember the financial difficulties which about that time started the downward trend of UFA, but they forget quite a few remarkable achievements of the period 1925-29. Foremost among them is

G. W. Pabst's *Joyless Street*, a powerful social study that attracted general attention not only because of Asta Nielsen's superb performance and a cast that included Werner Krauss and Greta Garbo (fresh from her triumph in *Gösta Berling*).

Even if Pabst's other pictures of the period—*The Love of Jeanne Ney*, for instance, or *Pandora's Box* (with Louise Brooks)—were not quite on the same level, there were a few other film-makers to make up for it: Paul Czinner, whose "psychological realism" led him to the production of such well-remembered films as *Nju* with Elisabeth Bergner and *The Dreaming Lips* with Emil Jannings and Conrad Veidt; or the screen adaptation of Schnitzler's novel *Fräulein Else*.

Nor would it be fair to omit in this context Dr Fanck's mountaineering films *The Holy Mountain* and *The White Hell of Piz Palü*, or Walter Ruttmann's dramatic feature-length documentary *Berlin, Symphonie einer Grosstadt*, or Lotte Reininger's delightful silhouette films, particularly *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*.

But that was the time when the rumbling of the approaching revolution could already be heard in the distance, and the sound film invaded Europe with Al Jolson's fearful song *Sonny Boy*.

Germany did not lag behind, and in March 1929 Walter Ruttmann had the satisfaction not only of seeing but also of hearing his new film *Melody of the World* on the screen. It would be futile though to describe in detail all the teething troubles of the sound film which were felt as much in Germany as in any other film-producing country.

Although in the following years technical progress was rapid, and certain types of German productions even succeeded in winning foreign markets, the general artistic level was not comparable to that of the early twenties, when new ideas and creative talents had seemed to sprout from the soil fertilized by the sacrifices of World War I.

Nevertheless, in 1930 the now universally acclaimed *Blue Angel* (directed by J. von Sternberg) achieved an unexpected measure of success and made Marlene Dietrich



famous. In the same year G. W. Pabst's *Westfront 1918* was praised by the critics, but did not appeal to the public at large because of its pacifist tendency. His *Kameradschaft*, on the other hand—made a year or two later in an impressively realistic style—shows commendable restraint in the use of sound and an artistic maturity which ensures the picture a place among the 'classics'.

But competently produced light comedies and film operettas with the popular couple, Lilian Harvey and Willy Fritsch, were then the order of the day, culminating in Eric Charell's universally admired *Der Kongress Tanzt* (*Congress Dances*).

Pictures of that period (1929-33) deserving serious consideration hardly exceed a dozen or so. Among them are Leontine Sagan's *Mädchen in Uniform* (still shown in many countries), the delightful film of children adapted from Erich Kästner's story *Emil und die Detektive*, Willi Forst's *Maskerade* (awarded a prize at the Venice Festival in 1933) and Max Ophüls' *Liebelei* finished just before Hitler's accession to power.

And then a shroud of mediaeval darkness descended upon the land and enveloped every

expression of independent thought, every cultural activity—including the cinema.

"One does not conquer the world with colourless pictures deprived of tendency!" said Goebbels in his speech on March 28, 1933. "The sharper the nationalistic outline a film possesses, the better its possibilities to conquer the world."

This neatly disposed of any picture without a nationalistic outline or tendency. Then the law of February 1934 introduced into the entertainment world the concepts of "*Vorprüfung*" (corresponding to governmental licensing power) and "*Geschmacks-Zensur*" i.e. censorship determined by "good taste".

In these circumstances enormous sums were sunk in pure propaganda pictures like *Hitlerjunge Quex*, *S.A.-Mann Brand* or *Jew Süss*, while cheap comedies and vulgar farces of the type of *The Scandal around the sow Jolanthe* represented the uneasy compromise designed to keep the populace amused.

While technical skill was not entirely absent from the studios (witness the internationally acclaimed legend film about the fabulous liar Baron von Münchhausen), the

*One of the first German sound films, The Blue Angel (1930), with Marlene Dietrich and Jannings, was a psychological melodrama of the infatuation of a middle-aged teacher for a cabaret artiste*

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*It was inevitable that the film would become an instrument of Nazi propaganda during the period in which Hitler ruled Germany. When war came films were directed violently against the enemy within—the Jews—and the enemy without—the British. (Left) The story of Jew Süss (1940) became anti-Semitic propaganda, giving the great actor Werner Krauss one of his most notorious roles. (Below) Ohm Krüger (1941) exposed for the edification of Germany and the occupied countries the alleged horrors of concentration camps set up by the British during the Boer War*



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*From the author*



*From the author*

After 1933 Dr Goebbels instituted state prizes for films glorifying various aspects of the new regime and way of life in Nazi Germany. Many of them were devoted to the theme of the Hitler Youth and the personal service the adolescent could render his Leader. (Above) *Hitlerjunge Quex*, made by Hans Steinhoff, was the first of these. (Right) *Stormtrooper Brand*, directed by Franz Seitz, used a semi-documentary technique in order to impress on the German people the rightness of the Nazi movement and the self-dedication of its heroes to the Hitler legend



inspiration was obviously lacking, since the vast majority of reputable film-makers such as Eric Pommer, Otto Preminger, Anatol Litvak, Henry Koster, Robert Siodmak, Max Ophuls and Billy Wilder emigrated to Hollywood after 1933, where Fritz Lang, William Dieterle and Ernst Lubitsch were already established.

And the conditions of film work under the Nazis can be easily imagined when one remembers Göring's famous dictum: "Whenever I hear the word 'intellect' mentioned—I grab my revolver."

As far as the cinema in the artistic sense of the word is concerned, the twelve years of the Hitler regime created a desert. The war years aggravated the situation through material destruction, and the division of Germany into two watertight compartments has made the return to the glorious past still more improbable, all the more so as the Neu-Babelsberg studios—the biggest and best equipped—are in the Russian Zone.

In these circumstances the present yearly production of about seventy films in Western

Germany must be considered a highly creditable achievement. If a great proportion of these pictures were of a high artistic standard it would be nothing short of a miracle. As a matter of fact, many of them are indifferent, and many more in deplorable taste. The latter, particularly if they belong to the category of the so-called "*Heimat-Filme*", sentimentalizing the beauty of the native soil and the first love of an innocent maiden, are the biggest box-office successes.

Commenting on this phenomenon the August 1953 number of *Film Forum* (the monthly of the German Film Society) says in its leading article: "All this can only be understood as the symptom of a deeply anchored psychological repression. A picture like *Decision Before Dawn* has shown us with embarrassing clarity what is being repressed. . . . But this repression of ours is taking on truly terrifying forms. . . ."

Thus the explanation for the low standard of the present-day pictures lies not only in the lack of talent, radically exterminated or chased away by the Nazis, but also in the

*After the war Eastern Germany, left with the best studios, had the advantage in production. One of the films from that source was Wozzeck, which ruthlessly exposed the old Prussian militarism*

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*Western German films have so far failed to retrieve the position held by the German cinema before Hitler's rise. An unpretentious comedy, *Film without Title*, was among the better productions*

level of taste to which the Hitler regime reduced the masses and to which the producers have willy-nilly to conform.

Most of the better-class German films shown in London in recent years, e.g. *Murderers Are Among Us*, *Marriage in the Shadow* or Büchner's *Wozzeck*, have been produced by the "DEFA" in the Russian Zone of Germany and have therefore no direct bearing on the problem of West German production.

*Film without Title*, however, an impressive work of some artistic merit, also shown in London a few years ago, was directed by Rudolph Jugert who lives and works in Western Germany. There are at least two of his colleagues whose talent is undeniable: Helmut Käutner and Wolfgang Liebeneiner. Yet none of them is offered a permanent contract, and very seldom is one of them allowed to work on a subject scripted or at least chosen by himself.

A glimpse behind the scenes reveals the reasons for this "splendid isolation". The German producers, frightened that one of

those "long-haired boys" could by a devilish ruse introduce some artistic element into a simple pot-boiler picture and thus ruin its box-office prospects, have without much ado decided to keep the "highbrows" at arm's length from the studios. Rudolph Jugert, it is true, was recently allowed to make two or three pictures, but all of them more or less symptomatic of his submission to the producers' wishes.

Whoever considers this set-up too fantastic to be credible will find confirmation of the facts in a statement recently made in public by a Berlin producer: "We can at any time and without the slightest difficulty produce masterpieces like *Bicycle Thieves* or *A Street-car Named Desire*, but we are only prepared to take such a risk if somebody is going to guarantee our losses inevitably resulting from the exploitation of such pictures!"

Considering this kind of mentality it is amazing indeed that a few acceptable films are still being produced in Germany every year, and that their standard is slowly but steadily improving.



# Portuguese Wild Flowers

by D. N. PATON

ON a lovely morning in April I disembarked from a Royal Mail Line steamer at Lisbon, to spend one of the most enjoyable fortnights I can remember.

I had intended to buy a small illustrated flora of the country on my arrival there. But after searching Lisbon for some time, I soon discovered that no such work existed to help the botanically minded traveller. It was thus necessary to refer to the standard work by Coutinho—a large volume in Portuguese and without illustrations.

Since this was to be my first short visit to the Iberian peninsula, I decided to try to photograph as many as possible of the wild flowers that were noticeably different from those of Northern Europe and the Alps. The areas to be covered were thus limited to the immediate surroundings of Lisbon, including Cintra; the highest mountains—the Sierra Estrela; and the mountainous, but inhabited, regions close to the Spanish border.

The climate of Portugal cannot be briefly described. It roughly divides the familiar climate of Northern Europe and the British Isles from that of the Mediterranean coast, with its heavy spring rainfall and arid summers. The country thus serves as a meeting-ground for two different types of flora; and, at Estoril, for instance, I saw such familiar plants of Northern Europe as the ling (*Caluna vulgaris*) and pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) growing side by side with exotic cactuses, palms and tree-ferns. The Portuguese climate differs considerably from that of the higher plateau of Spain to the east, since the moisture-laden Atlantic winds deposit most of their wetness before they reach the Spanish frontier.

Around Lisbon, therefore, the climate is not unlike that of south-west Ireland, and I noticed with interest the frequent appearance of the pennywort (*Cotyledon umbilicus*) on the damp walls, reminding me of the west of Ireland or the lanes near Dartmouth. So also with *Mesembryanthemum edule*—a truly Mediterranean plant—which made the coast one blaze of colour. Yet I remember finding this same plant growing less profusely along the Devon coast at Blackpool Bay.

To a newcomer like myself, the two most noticeable groups of plants were undoubtedly the cistuses and the bulbs. Nearly all the wide moorland tracts were covered by many kinds of cistus and helianthemum which, in April, were being pushed into a brilliant variety of reds, whites and yellows by the recent rain and intense sunshine. Later, however, the very woodiness of their stalks and wiriness of their linear leaves would serve as their protection against the drought check to follow in the summer.

So also with the bulbs, which either grow and flower in spring, or else, like the autumn crocus, reserve their flowering until after the summer drought, all the time storing their energy and moisture in their underground bulbs. Portugal is indeed famous for its miniature irises and narcissi. Wherever I went, the roadsides and stony wastelands were studded with countless blue heads of *Iris sisyrinchium*, while only less frequent were the little golden flowers of *Narcissus bulbocodium*, which has recently become so popular among garden-lovers in this country.

The Sierra Estrela is a bleak and formidable range of mountains running roughly ENE–WSW across the middle of the country, and rising to a height of 6540 feet. Wolves are still known to inhabit the wilder regions, but, in spite of sleeping in the open one night at about 4500 feet, we suffered no more than a drenching thunderstorm, which compelled us to shelter in a cave for the remainder of the night. At this height the bulbs were quite magnificent; in addition to *Narcissus bulbocodium* and *Narcissus pseudo-narcissus*, there were quantities of *Narcissus rupicola* and the fairylike *Narcissus triandrus* or “Angels’ Tears”.

On reaching the top of the snow-covered Sierra, we were thrilled to find many delightful dwarf crocuses: about two inches high and of a delicate purple hue, they were growing from sodden patches of peat-covered granite along a precipitous ridge, and seemed strangely fragile little plants to survive the rigours of their surroundings. But, alas, on account of the prospect of the climb, I had decided to leave my camera behind!





*All Kodachromes by the author*

(Above) North of the entrance to the Tagus lies the fashionable seaside resort of Estoril, and from there to Cape Finisterre the Atlantic coast runs northward in an almost unbroken sweep. This view shows the coast from near Cascais, where the cliffs fall steeply to the sea, and the scene is made brilliant by vast carpets of *Mesembryanthemum edule*. Its branches spread over the ground in a tangled mat, and the thick fleshy leaves (right) arise from them rather like bananas. The leaves are tinged with red, which makes the plant attractive even when not in flower. These leaves are sometimes used as an ingredient for making chutney, though it is from the fruits that the plant derives its name "edule"







(Above) In the wooded valley regions, the spring rains produce a lovely green softness. By the roadside are found occasional bushes of *Cistus ladaniferus*, with sticky branches and flabby white flowers—about as broad as tea-cups. In this case the petals are still wet with drops of rain

(Left) Except in the mountainous regions, the little *Iris sisyrinchium* grows on nearly every wasteland and along the roadsides; occurring at times in such profusion that it makes the grass to appear quite blue





(Above) Across the moorland between Cintra and the coast, the eye is struck by the richness of the hues, from pink to purple, of *Erica umbellata*. The plant resembles the bell heather so common in Britain



(Right) The miniature *Narcissus bulbocodium* is becoming so well known to British gardeners that it needs no description. But it is thrilling to find it growing wild in natural surroundings, which in Portugal range from woodland to barren mountain, or, as shown here, an open patch of damp clay soil





*The woods around Lisbon provide quite a treasure-store of interesting plants. Here and there are graceful heads of the tall red Gladiolus segetum, while the two orchids Ophrys fusca and Ophrys lutea (left) are to be seen in abundance. They seem to thrive together in the same woodland habitat*



*Among the orchids, the British Pyramidal Orchid is frequently seen. But Serapias cordigera (right) is equally plentiful, and almost startling on first acquaintance. From the oddly shaped head, each flower appears to stick out its rich reddish-purple tongue at anyone so bold as to look at it*





(Above) To imagine *Anagallis arvensis* as a "Scarlet Pimpernel" would seem a contradiction in terms. Yet its colour is very variable and may adopt most shades from red to blue or even white. In Britain, though the predominant colour is red, the blue variety is not unknown, while in Portugal the bluer colouring is the more common

Vast tracts of moorland in Portugal are ablaze with colour in spring. They are covered with a scrub of heaths and *cistus*, and dotted with innumerable small bulbs. The bright pinks of *Cistus crispus* (right) and whites of *Cistus bourgaeanus* contribute greatly to the general brilliance of the scene





# Bolivian Dancers

by CYNTHIA FAIN

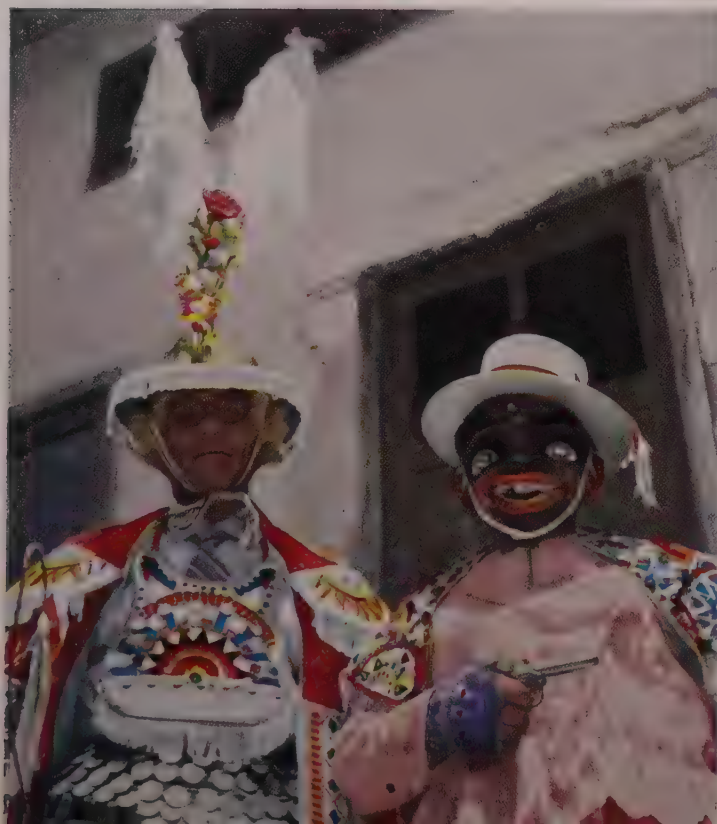


*Ektachromes by the author*

THE train slows down and protests in a series of gasps and whistles; the passengers, who also lack oxygen at nearly 14,000 feet, gasp but have not enough breath to protest. The fawn expanse of the high plateau stretches out to infinity, a strange mirage hovers on the horizon; as we approach, the whole distance scintillates while thin clouds of vapour blow across what we now recognize to be a vast salt lake. Above, the sky is a brilliant deep blue, seeming incredibly high; around us is a great, an immense emptiness. For miles and miles this void stretches out on either side. Then, suddenly, a troop of slim vicuñas appears and bounds away, and from time to time Indians pass. The train stops at Eucalip-

tus. Two surprisingly large trees shade a tiny station where a couple of bored officials exchange gossip with the people on the train. We leave; and the loneliness closes in once more until we see the semicircle of rocky hills forming the background to the town of Oruro which is modern, built as most Latin-American towns are, in a series of straight intersecting streets of small houses and poor shops without the least colour or character. It is a tin-mining centre, eminently utilitarian. The slightly Mediterranean inspiration of its Prefecture is submerged in the pervading air of provincial Victorianism. The hills rise abruptly behind the town; on one side towers a gigantic Christ, on the other a large cross





Many groups of dancers take part in the Lenten festival at Oruro, in Bolivia. The centre of the fiesta is the Diablada, a mystery in the mediæval sense: three main companies of dancers practise for months beforehand. The first consists of well-to-do bourgeois; the second is the company of butchers, perhaps the oldest and certainly the richest. The third, large but modest, consists of artisans and miners. Other companies join these. (Opposite) The Tobas are miners from the Chilean frontier, but claim their origin among the Indians of the Gran Chaco, which is further east, in whose memory they wear the feather head-dresses and wield with such dexterity the long lances in the beautiful quadrille that they dance. (Above) The Morenos, whose white wigs, elaborate costumes and fantastic hats caricature 18th-century Spaniards. (Left) The Master of Ceremonies, who is a Moreno, with a dancer in a Negro mask, one of the few individuals belonging to no group



The struggles between Lasciviousness and St Michael are an important part of the Diablada. (Right) Lasciviousness, who with her enormous blue-green eyes is a European (and thus a vice of foreign origin), is pursued by St Michael in a plumed helmet, with a curved sword and silver wings. She leaps and whirls, gnashing her teeth, shaking her fists, but only after having been frequently and considerably admonished by the saint does she finally give up the struggle, and at last virtue is triumphant. (Below) Another figure of Lasciviousness in the midst of the devils, whom she tempts. Behind them can be seen the arcades decorated with silver plates, cups and spoons that are erected in front of the church of Socavon, beneath which the dancers pass on their way to celebrate mass on the morning of the Sunday before Lent





gay with coloured lights; at the foot of the hills is the church of Our Lady of Socavon, patroness of the miners; to her rise all the prayers and supplications of Oruro; to her is dedicated the Lenten festival, with its splendid dancing and elaborate costumes, which I had come to see.

From early morning on the Saturday before Lent the town begins to fill with visitors and more and more bottles of alcohol and beer are emptied. Early in the afternoon all is in motion, groups of musicians attack at different times and in varying keys the air of the *Diablada*, the theme which permeates the whole *fiesta*. People begin to walk in time and to talk in time to its rhythm; when coming out of the Cathedral on Sunday morning I found a group of musicians playing the inevitable tune, which was so omnipresent that even when the organist lapsed into a sedate and ecclesiastical version of it I had been in no way surprised.

The following morning I went with the Prefect to the market. The market women of Oruro are well known for their good looks and their freedom of speech and conduct. They earn a comfortable income which enables them to keep their "common law husbands" in a state of idleness. The Prefect was hailed by a female chorus. They offered us the inevitable alcohol and the younger ones took us to join a band of dancers. Their long black plaits and brilliantly coloured skirts flying, they whirled round and round while their older companions, crowned with white top hats, seated behind mounds of scarlet pimientos, tomatoes and oranges, kept up a running commentary on their customers and on the latest scandals. Finally the Prefect fell out of the dance. He remarked that he had danced and drunk now for forty-eight hours, but "as Prefect of Oruro I am obliged to go to the devil."

During the evening a number of the notabilities as well as various clubs and social organizations gave fancy-dress balls where it is polite to arrive towards midnight and to leave at dawn; and as Bolivia is in the heart of South America, the inevitable *Diablada*



Cynthia L

*The role of St Michael is often hereditary, and apprenticeship begins at an early age. This small boy's helmet is the legacy of a pre-war German military mission*

gives place in a large measure to Argentine *tangos*, Chilean *cuecas*, Peruvian *marineras*, Brazilian *sambas*, Mexican *raspas* and Bolivian *huaynos*. Everyone dances and generally very well. The ladies of Oruro are good-looking; the mines have attracted people from all over the world, among them a number of Yugoslavs, and the mixture of Bolivian and Yugoslavian is particularly successful.

But the centre of the *fiesta* is the *Diablada*, a mystery in the mediaeval sense of the word. It is between the town and the church that the drama passes. The actors alternately render homage, to the Prefect that which is Caesar's and to the Virgin of Socavon that which is God's. Each member of each of the three chief companies of dancers is bound by a vow to dance during three



successive years in her honour.

Early on Saturday afternoon I was installed, cameras loaded, recording tape ready, in a front room in the Prefecture opening onto the Plaza which was already filled with a seething mob. From the distance came wave upon wave of music and cheering, a moment of silence followed and floating across the tree-tops came the sound of Pan-pipes and a little drum playing the magic air of the Diablada. Then, suddenly as the sound of cheering had ceased, as suddenly it burst out again ten times as loud, the music became deafening and, preceded by the police, their faces and uniforms seeming dark grey by contrast, the extraordinary procession appeared.

Attired in fantastic costumes, the long horse-hair manes of their masks waving, the brilliant scarlet and orange capes and the shining silver breast-plates glittering, the first group of devils, leaping and pirouetting, burst into the Plaza. On they came, emitting strange raucous growls and hoarse cries; they waved long articulated green and red serpents and their heavy silver spurs rang as they danced. They were followed by a number of cars and lorries armoured with silver objects of all sorts. Stepping lightly among the vehicles came a vicuña carrying various plates and cups of pure gold. The three groups of devils, having danced through the square, proceeded up to the Church of Socavon, where the silver objects were attached to a series of arches forming a silver arcade. The crowd dispersed in all directions and the feast really began.

During four days and nights from Saturday till dawn on Ash Wednesday the whole town dances; they dance and drink and begin again and only a few weak-lunged, weak-hearted foreigners think of sleep. At each street corner is an orchestra, everyone keeps open house; the all-pervading obsessing air of the Diablada drives them on and on.

The next morning the three companies were already dancing at 9 a.m. Afterwards they formed into a long procession and proceeded to the Church of Socavon where passing under the arcades of silver they danced up to the very door of the church, only removing their masks on entering. Each com-

pany had a special mass said for them, after which they left the church, resuming their masks and their dancing immediately they were outside the door. The procession then wended its way to the Prefecture where other companies of dancers were already assembled. There were the Andalusians, a small group in Spanish costume, as their name and origin implies. They were already dancing a kind of quadrille. After them came the Morenos and the Tobas.

The public watch the Diablada with passionate interest and the dancers themselves enact their roles with the utmost conviction; the most curious element is the contrast between the idea of a devil-dance and the virtue they wish to attain by the veneration of the Virgin, whose protection they seek. The Diablada is the dance for the protection of the miners, or the rites of exorcism against the dangers which menace them in the mine. The heavenly protector is offered not flowers but objects of silver or of metal coming from the earth of Oruro.

In the mines the miners are in the habit of presenting to some stone resembling a human form leaves of coca, cigarettes, coins or various other precious objects. Before the Spanish conquest this earth goddess, this Indian Ceres, was universally worshipped under the name of Pacha Mama; and as the church of San Domingo at Cuzco was built with the sombre stone which originally enclosed the Temple of the Sun, so perhaps is walled into the heart of the poor Indian the veneration of that which was, and is, and will be, the earth maternal and eternal.

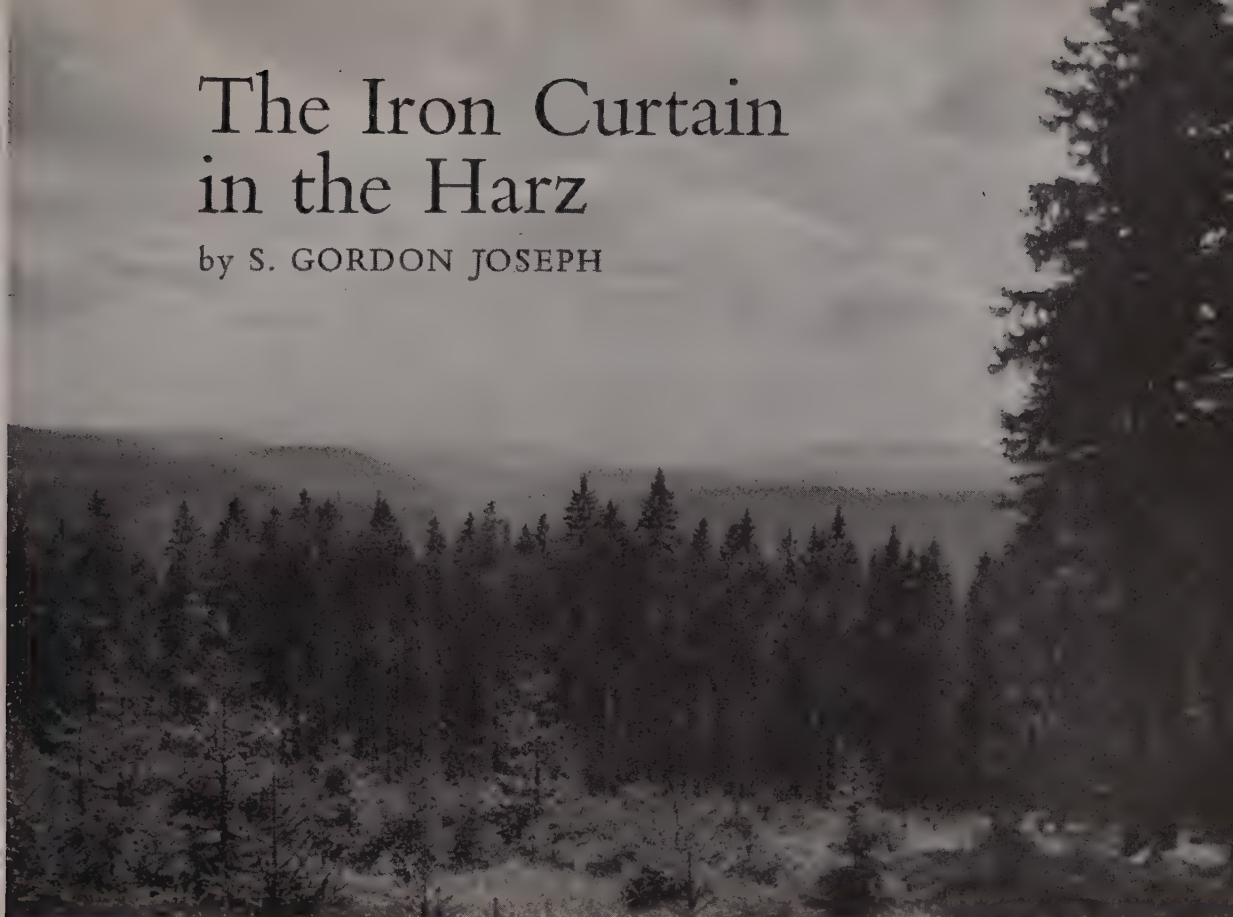


A. J. Thornton



# The Iron Curtain in the Harz

by S. GORDON JOSEPH



By courtesy of the German Tourist Information Bureau

*Our newspapers have made us familiar with the small-scale view, traversing continents, of that line which, since the end of World War II, has divided the political world-map between hostile camps, nowhere more tensely opposed than in Germany. The following pages show part of this line magnified to the largest possible scale—as it appears on the ground to the local inhabitants*

*In the Harz Mountains you can stand on one side of the Iron Curtain and talk to men and women cultivating their land on the other. It is only a barbed-wire fence, often in disrepair, and would not prevent them from crossing over the last few yards into the Western Zone. If you ask them why they don't, they will shrug and reply: "We've always lived and worked here and we've got things going again at last."*

*That, in the Harz region, denotes the character of the Iron Curtain: the peasants' tenacity for their land, on both sides of the border, and their relative unconcern for their position on the edge of a political crevasse. On the western side, moreover, conditions have greatly improved since the period immediately following the division of Germany between the different social systems of East and West; a division by which the Harz region was especially affected because the zonal border cuts it in half, separating neigh-*

*bouring villages with a common local history and way of life. During the Middle Ages an important metal-mining industry existed; but since then the economy of the whole region has come to be based mainly on peasant agriculture, forestry and a thriving tourist industry.*

*One of the first effects of the division was a huge influx of refugees from the Russian Zone to the towns and villages of the western Harz, whose small populations often doubled within a few months. There was severe poverty and unemployment and much hardship in housing and schooling conditions, for the region is only just capable of supporting its normal population and could not absorb the newcomers. By now most of the refugees have moved on further west, and numerous tourists again visit the magnificent wooded mountain scenery, the mediaeval towns—among the few in Germany undamaged by the last war—the ski-ing centres, spas and health-resorts.*





(Left) "Warning. Zone border." The main motor-road through the Harz district runs for part of its length parallel to the border between the Russian and British Zones. Although occasionally a solitary member of the East German People's Police patrols the woods along the Russian side, there is little here to indicate that this line divides two armed worlds. Indeed, the peasant women (below) carry on their work quite unconcernedly within a hundred yards of the border. On their smallholding near the village of Hohegeiss they are lifting potatoes, the staple crop of the undulating plateaux of the Harz. Hohegeiss is also one of the health-resorts that bring Western visitors to the district

All remaining photographs by the author







(Above) Four villagers from the western Harz take a placid Saturday afternoon stroll along the Iron Curtain: a few strands of barbed wire and a narrow strip of land ploughed clear. Chance decided which side of it their village would lie and they value all the more the lack of disturbance in their lives. They are foresters for the most part; timber is one of the area's main products and fir, pine and spruce cover more than 70 per cent of the mountains of the Oberharz. (Right) Wood-cutters at work on the Ravensberg slopes above Bad Sachsa. In these parts whole villages—houses, churches, schools—are built of timber, and a double layer of wood ensures warmth in the cold winters



*Goslar is the northern gateway to the Harz. Founded over a thousand years ago as a city of the Holy Roman Empire, it became in the later Middle Ages a place of importance in the Hanseatic League. Its citizens prospered; and from that time date the solid half-timbered and wooden-boarded houses which still stand along the tree-lined stream and peaceful lanes*





Es grüne die Tanne, es wachse das Erz—"May the fir-trees grow green, may the ore flourish", went an old saying: for the towns of the Harz once thrived on timber and the mining of gold, silver, copper, lead, iron and zinc. This wealth built the proud patrician houses and guild-halls of Goslar (above) with their steeply sloping roofs, here seen from the church spire. The decline and cessation of mining and the lack of other industrial development had the result that Goslar's mediaeval appearance was preserved intact and continues to draw large numbers of sightseers (right) who make a useful contribution to the prosperity of the Harz



# The Chilean Lake District

by VIOLA G. GARVIN

*In some atlases there are maps distinguishing, in relation to the plants that grow there, between the earth's various zones. One type, classified as "Mediterranean", repeats itself in southern California, the southern tip of Africa, south-western Australia and central Chile. In the cool, southern part of this last vegetational zone lies the delectable land described by Miss Garvin*

SEÑOR AGUSTIN EDWARDS, when he was Chilean Ambassador to the Court of St James's, wrote two fascinating books packed with curious knowledge about his beloved native country. In one of them he speaks of the Rio Laja, whose abrupt falls over the great slab of rock which gives the river its name are one of the sights of Chile. "South of this river", he says, "begins, in all its magnificence, the great Araucanian forest." And since the most mysterious and gleaming of Chile's many mysterious, gleaming waters are to be found in that wild green setting, and since the river flows down from a lake of the same name, guarded by one of the tall, snow-capped volcanoes that stand sentinel over most of these lakes along the Andean margins of this fabulous and legend-haunted region, we may as well take that river as our point of departure.

True, the Lake District proper only opens in its full grandeur further south. But the interlocking system and network of rivers begins to be noticeable up here, so that, once you know them and learn to trace them to their sources and to recognize their affluents, you can play a watery game of snakes and ladders on the map, which will take you from province to province and at last from lake to lake. If you follow the Laja, for instance, you will find it flowing into the wide strong current of the river Bío-Bío, upon which Concepción, third of all Chilean cities, stands. Two provinces lie between that of Concepción and the more southerly Cautín, where we shall find our first group of lakes. But if we could embark in an Indian canoe and skim south-east, up the broad, smooth Bío-Bío as it winds and curves through sand-dunes and low, wooded hills, we should find its source in a small lake, Galletué, which lies not at all far from Volcano Llaima. And the volcano, with its snowy slopes and bewitching Araucaria pine trees, lies actually within the Cautín border and is gloriously visible both from Temuco, capital city of this province, and from Lautaro, where hatcheries of Brown and Rainbow trout are kept by the state, so

that the rivers and lakes of this fisherman's paradise may be annually re-stocked with young fish.

Following precept and precedent I have plunged in *medias res*. But it may be useful, before going further, to locate the Chilean Lake District more securely in its geography.

The narrow ribbon (nowhere more than 110 miles across) which is Chile unwinds for 2600 miles, from her borders with Peru and Bolivia at latitude 18° S, to where, at 56° S, Cape Horn points towards the South Pole. The extreme north of this fantastic stretch of land contains the deserts and nitrate fields. The extreme south is a wilderness of island, jagged fjord, estuary, wind, rain—and the sheep-farming plains of Patagonia. In between is the fertile and generous Central Valley, extending through our region of lakes and rivers down to Puerto Montt on the Gulf of Reloncaví, which is the terminus of the longitudinal railway (spine of this elongated country) and the southern border of our land of wood, water and volcano.

Out of all her twenty-five provinces, with their dramatic contrasts of climate and scenery, of life and occupation, we are here chiefly concerned with four provinces that lie, roughly, between latitudes 38° and 42°. They are the provinces called Cautín, Valdivia, Osorno and Llanquihue, and though they are an integral part of Chile, stretching a hand north to Santiago, a hand far south to Punta Arenas, they are a world in themselves. They have been called a world of "blue mirrors", but the mirrors vary from blue to green, from steel to pearl, and in the setting sun or dreamy dawn can turn to molten gold. The lakes, which win them that lovely title, are set among virgin forest and cleared fields, grey cliffs of rock and stretches of green meadow; and every one seems guarded by some stately volcano, nominally, but not always, asleep. It is a world of farms and herds, of cattle and flocks, of fruit and grain: a world where you meet the blue-eyed stalwart sons of the German settlers of a century ago; where, among the boat-boys and in the





*All photographs, except one, by Jacques Cori*

*Like most Chilean rivers, Rio Laja sweeps down from the Andes and over to the Pacific. In green stretches below these falls lurk fighting rainbow trout, which Chileans come miles to try conclusions with. Up-river, near the lake-source, is the Abanico plant, one of three great projects to harness water-power and stimulate industrial and agricultural development*



*With luck, and the innate Chilean appreciation of the word mañana (tomorrow), Pucón may keep its lazy, rural character in spite of turismo and the hotel-de-luxe. Off the main road to the Argentine pigs root happily on the grassy verges of the lanes, and sheep, goats, geese, ducks and turkeys wander unrestrained. Barefoot urchins in ragged ponchos wander too. A queer, natural sympathy in the air makes all sorts friends*



*Chilean horsemen are famous throughout the world. They seem, like centaurs, to be part of their satin-coated ponies. Each big farm has its seasonal rodeo or round-up in which riders and beasts try out their qualities and prowess. In the media luna, or half-moon, of an arena fenced with springy, withy-woven saplings the huasos assemble in their gallant mantas and wide hats to face the nervous steers. Round them a critical audience cheers every point of style with enthusiasm*





*Some harmony of mood seems to link the clear, green waters of Lake Todos los Santos with the gentle, upward sweep of the snowy cone of Osorno, a volcano dominating not only the lake but the whole southern landscape of Chile's lake district. Todos los Santos, known also as "Esmeralda", is walled with forest and has every wayward charm. Beyond is Lake Nahuel-Huapi, another jewel on the Argentine side of the frontier*





*Osorno, the millionaire town of southern Chile, perhaps of all Chile, lies north and west of the volcano. It was founded by the Spanish conquistadores at the junction of two rivers: the strong, swift Rahue and the dreamy, silken "ladies' river", Rio Damas. Fringed with bushes and wild flowers, the latter traverses rich, well-cultivated country before flowing under the bridge outside the town, from which this view was taken*



*A century ago, before the dogged work of German colonists had cleared and settled this wild region of virgin forest, lake and mountain, Lago Llanquihue was the "Lost Place" that its Indian name betokens. Now it is a lively centre. Steamers and motor-boats ply up and down its broad waters with travellers to and from the Argentine. Puerto Varas, its chief port, is connected by rail with Puerto Montt to the south on the Gulf of Reloncaví and so with the sea lanes of the Pacific*



villages you doff an invisible hat to the silent, graceful, dignified aloofness of the ragged Indians in their battered headgear and worn ponchos. It is a world in which “*los Yanquis*” descend briskly and efficiently from aeroplanes, armed, so it seems, with a whole kitchen battery of hardware, with which to tackle the trout, salmon and other fish in the lakes and rivers. It is a world where you will find mellow Chileans, quiet English, Scots and Irish, thoughtfully considering their flies with a view to tomorrow’s fishing. Yes: it is a world apart; a world, if you have ever haunted there, that will haunt you forever. For you have been made a freeman of its aloof quiet, its natural treasures and surprises, its climate of mingled sun and rain, the exhilaration of its contrasts, the breathless beauty of its evening skies when the sinking sun floods the whole wide arch of heaven with amber, rose, apricot, violet, turquoise and green; and the rocky cliffs and lonely trees turn to black velvet silhouettes against the last warm light, and then the dark comes and the stars rush out, and the constellation of the Southern Cross seems to hang so near and lustrous and trembling that you feel you could stand up in the boat and reach for a shining fruit from its branches. And you reel in your

line, and are rowed home in a chill darkness, brilliant with stars, to tumble out and help haul the little boat up on the lake beach and walk silently back to the warm, welcoming hotel with its wooden walls and congenial company prepared to swap tales of the day’s catch over a round or two of drinks. . . .

I am forgetting again, or rather, remembering . . . there is something about this part of the world that exercises enchantment, not only over the Indians, whose mythology has peopled the lakes with monsters, maidens, ghostly birds, ships and dragons, but over the ordinary traveller. Nature is so large, quiet and dominating here that man’s pettiness goes underground. Trying to write of it all, I find myself back in it and apt to forget data in memory and experience.

In the four provinces of Cautín, Valdivia, Osorno and Llanquihue there are twelve major lakes besides a number of small, delightful ones to which wise anglers make pilgrimage, often to be rewarded with noble fish and shy, unusual hours with untouched Nature. For instance, Lago Villarrica is the largest and most notable lake of the big three in Cautín Province. But there is a little elfin lake with a Mapuche name that sounds like Willy Pilloon. You can see it, if you drive



A. J. Thornton



Arques Cori

*From Peulla, on Lake Todos los Santos, the road to Argentina runs for a stretch alongside Rio Peulla, whose spacious waters have their source in El Tronador. This view of the river is from near Casa Pangué, the Chilean frontier-post at the foot of the narrow pass which winds up among dense vegetation to the crest and the border*

along the lake road from Pucón towards Volcano Villarrica—twinkling beyond the larger water in a mischievous, enticing way. This volcano, after fifty years' quiescence, erupted savagely in the December and January of 1948 and 1949. I was there in the following March, and saw for myself how drastically the river bed was altered, how houses and roads had been destroyed and the snows of the graceful cone melted. We went up to the level of the hot lava: it burned our shoes, and the trees were withered phantoms; there was no colour or life left on those nightmare slopes. Yet old Villarrica seemed friendly enough, when we regained our pleasant hotel. Looking out of my window, to the right, by day, I could see a regiment of yellowing poplars against rising heights of larch and hazel,

of oak, elm, laurel, beech and the glossy Boldo trees. Looking left, by night, a red glow in the sky showed that the tall volcano was still fuming.

Shall I ever forget that dear hotel, which has been burnt down since I was there? It was built of wood, as most houses are there, though the white of concrete is creeping in. The wood was silvered by weather; a vine, bearing little, sweet, white grapes, clambered over it and framed my windows. Rats and mice used it as a ladder to heavenly rooms where crumbs of biscuit or sandwich were to be salvaged from unwary guests who left their windows open. Beneath mine was a row of fairy-tale maple trees, with leaves silver on one side, gold on the other; at sundown, garrulous flights of Choroy, green parrots, flew chattering overhead and made life much richer and stranger than I had ever known it.

I could fill this article with news of that holiday in Pucón, and of Antumalal, the little sun-trap further up Lago Villarrica, with its tiny crescent shore of black volcanic sand and spreading Peumo trees with their carmine berries. In Pucón I caught my first fish, picked up a jade-and-scarlet parrot's feather in a country lane and saw my first incredible hummingbird, whirring and shimmering like those old tops of childhood. His long beak was probing a flower

on a tree, and the flower was the lovely crimson bell of the waxen Copihue, which is Chile's national flower. And there were the butterflies and wild flowers; the unaccustomed bird-calls, some of them mournful; the new leaves and berries; the treasure trove of the dusky beaches—wave-carved wood, pumice stones, all manner of birds' feathers. And there were the rough fences of horizontal tree-trunks pegged to uprights on the top of which small hawks perched as though on guard over the fields of grain beyond. There were the patient oxen, yoked as in Italy, dragging their load and guided by a ragged boy with a slender wand.

Yet there was aspirin and toothpaste in the chemist's shop; and Señor Pastene, the amiable chemist (a Pastene was among the original *conquistadores* four centuries ago)



hurried to lend us his glossy North-American magazines, in case rain and tedium set in.

Valdivia Province must be the richest of all in lakes. She counts to her honour lakes Calafquén, Panguipulli, Riñihue, Puyehue, Piriñhueico and Ranco, where I spent a second charmed holiday, and which is a small world of water, with ports and steamers and a continual to-and-fro of people and traffic. Many of these lakes have well-appointed hotels on their shores, as well as establishments for curative baths. Chile—land of earthquakes, volcanoes, minerals—is also a land of fantastic medicinal waters. Hot springs abound in these lake regions and you can take your choice from sulphur to iron for your cure. They bottle them, too. Not even in France is there so marvellous and varied a range of sparkling health in shapely glass as there is in Chile.

The city of Valdivia, who lends her ancient name to the province, is rich in other things : in history and association, in the backward look and the forward glance. Here are still to be seen Spanish cannon and fortresses of the time of the Conquest. But the life now is vivid and alert again, after years of mouldering, because of the German settlers who arrived round about 1850 to take over and condition a derelict neighbourhood. What a struggle with damp, Mother Nature and human nature they had ! But in four months they had the old place, sacked and sacked again as it had been by the Indians and grown lost and lazy, on its feet. Breweries, shoe-makers, carpenters, cabinet-makers, leather-workers; neat wooden houses, pretty gardens, clean streets, a proud plaza again . . . nowhere in the world has German skill and industry done a finer job than Carlos Andwandter and his pioneer settlers did in these forlorn, abandoned southern lands of Chile.

Another Chilean writer, Benjamin Subercaseaux, whose natural intelligence over-tops a slightly wilful intellect, has a useful word to say about the settling of Valdivia and also of Osorno and Llanquihue : it was planned and carried through by the cheerful, vigorous genius of one remarkable man—otherwise a bit of a misfit in the society of his time—Don Vicente Pérez Rosales, who was appointed immigration officer, under the wise and far-seeing administration of President General Bulnes (1841-51).

Subercaseaux imaginatively couples the Chilean's warmth, vision and soul with the German's strong arm, industry and discipline. Together these two forces opened up the

three southern provinces and indeed brought shining order into chaos. Difficulties were manifold. Titles to land were vague or faked; Santiago, the capital and seat of government, was far away and out of touch; crooks sprang up like mushrooms; the Indians, near the end of their long, stubborn resistance, were in their simple wretchedness open to all kinds of corruption. This is a story in itself, only to be touched on here. That first shipload from Europe did such wonders that their names are among the glorious in Chilean annals.

Rosales, tireless and eager to bring life into this desolation of forest and water which he sensed might become a vital point in the economy of his country, hacked his way through pathless woods and in a canoe with an Indian guide explored lakes and rivers. At last, he climbed the steepes of the volcano Osorno, and though the day was misty and baffling, he did at length see white sails upon a large water and realized that the sea and a possible port for immigrants lay not far from the mighty lake of Llanquihue below him.

He was a one-man dynamo : by 1853 the charming port on the sea was built and called Puerto Montt; and soon it was connected with Puerto Varas, the chief port on the great lake which is a highway to Argentina.

Besides Lago Rupanco, the Province of Osorno owns part of this lake which is more like an inland sea. Her capital city is rich and comfortable and very German. And the outlying landscape of tilled fields, meadows, woods and rivers is mellow and kind even in the streaming rain in which I saw it. A rich province.

Rich, too, must be Llanquihue Province with similar busy industry and agriculture as well as her thronging fish-markets and the incessant travellers' traffic from the Argentine. For if you embark at Puerto Varas, with its clean, almost toy-land streets and take steamer across the lake to Ensenada, and so to Petrohué and Peulla situated on the most lovely lake of them all, the Lago Todos los Santos or (because of its peerless colour) Esmeralda, you can go on under the vigilance of El Tronador—a mountain on the Chilean-Argentine border whose rumblings come from ice-cracklings not fire-belchings—and so reach the most majestic of the Argentine lakes which is called Nahuel Huapi.

Chile is a land of freedom : and down here, among lake and forest, Araucanian, Spaniard, Basque, French, Swiss, Yugoslav, British, Irish as well as those first doughty Germans, have helped to make it so and keep it so.

# Explorers' Maps

## IV. The Portuguese Sea-way to the Indies

by R. A. SKELTON

*This series of articles by the Superintendent of the Map Room at the British Museum presents, in regional order, some episodes in the history of exploration for which the evidence of maps is specially interesting or accessible. The text is to be read as a commentary on the maps and not as a connected history of discovery. Having dealt with the search for northern and western routes from Europe to the Far East, Mr Skelton now turns to the pioneers of the sea route round Africa*

MARCO POLO's travels, which at the end of the 13th century "created Asia for the European mind", opened up the land routes between East and West. Over these passed missionaries carrying western Christianity into Asia, and caravans bearing the spices and textiles of Persia, India and China to European markets. When the Moslem Turks established themselves across these routes by the end of the 14th century, the Indian and Persian trade was canalized through the Genoese and Venetian 'factories', or agencies, on the Black Sea and in the Levant.

To break the monopoly of the Italian maritime states, the nations on the oceanic fringe of Europe looked to the sea routes. The first stage was the occupation of the Atlantic islands as advanced outposts. In the 14th century the Canaries were settled by Spain. The other groups fell to the Portuguese: Madeira and Porto Santo were colonized in 1418-19, the Azores from about 1440, and voyages were made into the Atlantic in search of the legendary islands which dotted the western edge of 15th-century charts. As late as 1487 a Portuguese expedition sailed with a royal charter to discover the Isle of the Seven Cities, or Antillia.

But it was by the east that the Portuguese were to find and develop a navigable route to India and Cathay. Whether this was deliberately conceived as the objective of the series of voyages along the African coast initiated by Prince Henry "the Navigator" from 1418, is uncertain. By some mediaeval geographers the "torrid zone" of the tropics was believed to be uninhabitable, and in Ptolemy's world-map the Indian Ocean was closed on the south, in 15° S, by a continuous coastline connecting eastern Africa to the south-east peninsula of Asia; but other classical authorities could be quoted in support of the "circumnavigability" of Africa. Some maps of the 14th and 15th centuries had shown a

sea passage into the Indian Ocean round Africa, whose southward extension was underestimated by about half; and Fra Mauro (Fig. 1), thirty years before the Cape of Good Hope was rounded by Dias, drew Africa with a southern horn, derived no doubt from reports of Arab navigation along the east coast.

It is clear that Henry's plans developed in the light of reports from his captains as they pushed southward down the west coast of Africa. His overriding purposes—to pursue the crusade against Moslem power, to extend Portuguese trade, and to add to geographical knowledge—did not necessarily call for an advance into the Indian Ocean. They found ample scope in the Negro kingdoms of Guinea, to whose markets the caravan trade in gold, ivory and slaves could be diverted from the Moorish merchants north of the Sahara. From here too the Christian Kingdom of Prester John, identified with Ethiopia, might be reached overland. In 1455 it was reported to lie six days' journey from the Gambia, and an Ethiopian mission visited Lisbon eight years before Henry's death in 1460. But the anxious scrutiny of the trend of the coastline by successive expeditions points to a growing belief in the possibility of a sea-way by the south and east; and there is evidence that long before his death Henry was thinking of Guinea as a stage on the way to India.

The initial phase in his plan however was the discovery of Guinea, and the first obstacle Cape Nun, lying in 28° N. "Because," wrote an early navigator, "it was found that anyone who rounded it never returned, it was called 'capo de non'—who passes never returns." It was nevertheless passed by 1421, and in 1434 Gil Eannes rounded Cape Bojador, in 26° N. Nine years later the Gulf of Arguim, south of Cape Blanco, in 20° N had been reached; and in 1445 Dinis Dias passed



(Fig. 1) Africa, in the circular MS world-map of Fra Mauro, 1459. (South is at the top.) Portuguese discoveries to Cape Verde and Cape Rosso (below "Sinus Ethiopicus") are indicated on the west coast. Prester John's Kingdom of "Abassia" lies at the Nile sources. In a legend Fra Mauro affirms his belief (despite Ptolemy) in an open sea-way between the "Sea of India" and the surrounding ocean: he depicts this in his map







the mouth of the River Senegal and Cape Verde. "Thus was discovered at last the country of the first blacks", for the Portuguese had come to "the end of the desert". The coast, observes the contemporary chronicler, "was found to run south with many headlands, which the Prince caused to be added to the navigating charts". The extent of Portuguese discovery to this date is shown in the chart drawn at London in 1448 by the Venetian Andrea Bianco (Fig. 2).

In 1455 and 1456 Alvisé Cadamosto made voyages to the Gambia and Rio Grande, sailing up the rivers and trading in the markets. By 1460 the Cape Verde Islands had been discovered, and two years later Pero da Sintra passed beyond Sierra Leone. These discoveries are laid down in the chart drawn in 1468 by Grazioso Benincasa of Ancona (Fig. 3). The tide of discovery now ran strongly, and successive voyages took the Portuguese eastward to the Gold Coast, where in 1481-2 the fort of St George del Mina (Fig. 7, inset) was built, and to the head of the Gulf of Guinea, where to their discomfort they found the coast trending south; and they crossed the Equator to 2° S.

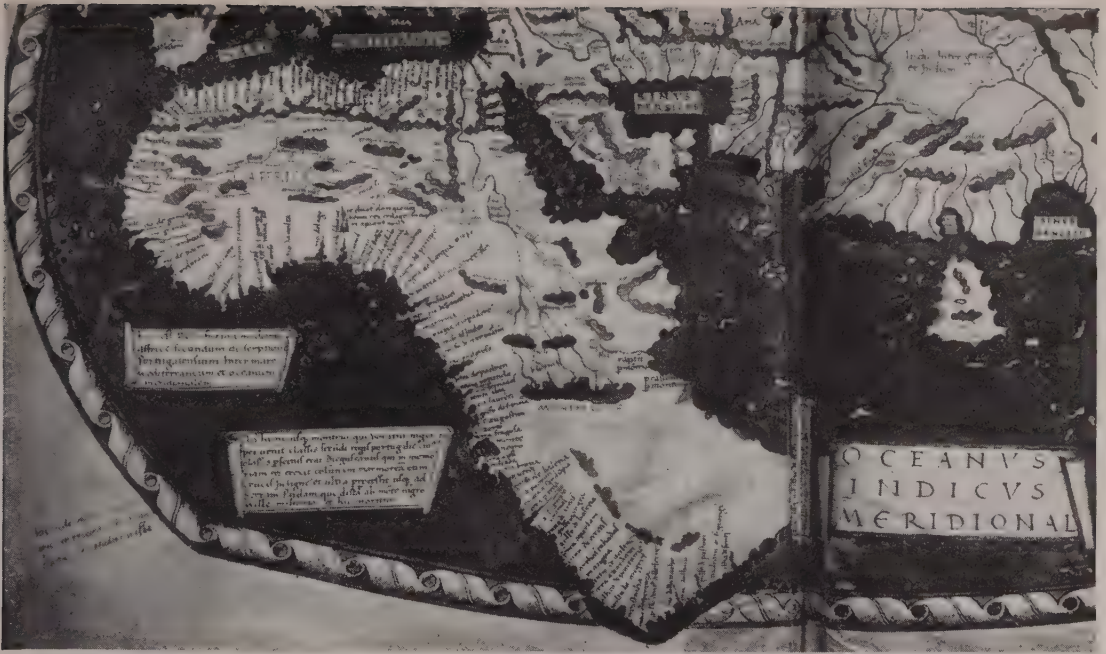
When Henry's nephew King John II came to the throne in 1481, the "Indies" had become the objective for the African voyages. It was natural that Columbus should first (in 1484-5) have sought backing from Portugal "seeing that the King D. João frequently ordered the coast of Africa to be explored with the intention of going by that route to reach India"; nor was it less natural that his estimate of the distance to "the Isle Cypangu by the Western Ocean" won little credit from the better-informed Portuguese cosmographers. By now indeed John had made an encouraging advance southward along the African coast. In 1484 Diogo Cão returned from the two years' voyage in which he had reached the Congo and Cape Lobo (Cape Santa Maria) in 13° S. On discovering the Congo he "set up beyond its mouth to the south-east a tall stone pillar with a threefold inscription, in Latin, Portuguese and Arabic, and it was accordingly called Rio do Padrão". This was the first of the stone columns or *padrões*, surmounted by crosses, to be erected by Portuguese captains, at King John's order, to mark their new discoveries. The two *padrões* set up by Cão on his voyage of 1482-4 are shown in the chart of Cristoforo Soligo (Fig. 4). Cão's second voyage (1485-7) took him as far south as Cape Cross, in 21° 50' S (southernmost cross on Fig. 7), where he died.



(Fig. 3) This MS chart by G. Benincasa (1468) gives "Rio de Gambia" from Cadamosto's voyages of 1455-6 and the Sierra Leone coast to "caosta Anna" from da Sintra's expedition of 1462







(Fig. 5: above) "The true modern form of Africa from the description of the Portuguese", in a MS world-map drawn by Martellus about 1490. A legend off the east coast refers to the point "reached by the latest voyage of the Portuguese in 1489"; place-names mark the limit of Dias's exploration. The representation of South Asia follows Ptolemy. (Fig. 6: below) The first separate map of Africa. A woodcut on the title-page of a collection of voyages published at Venice in 1507



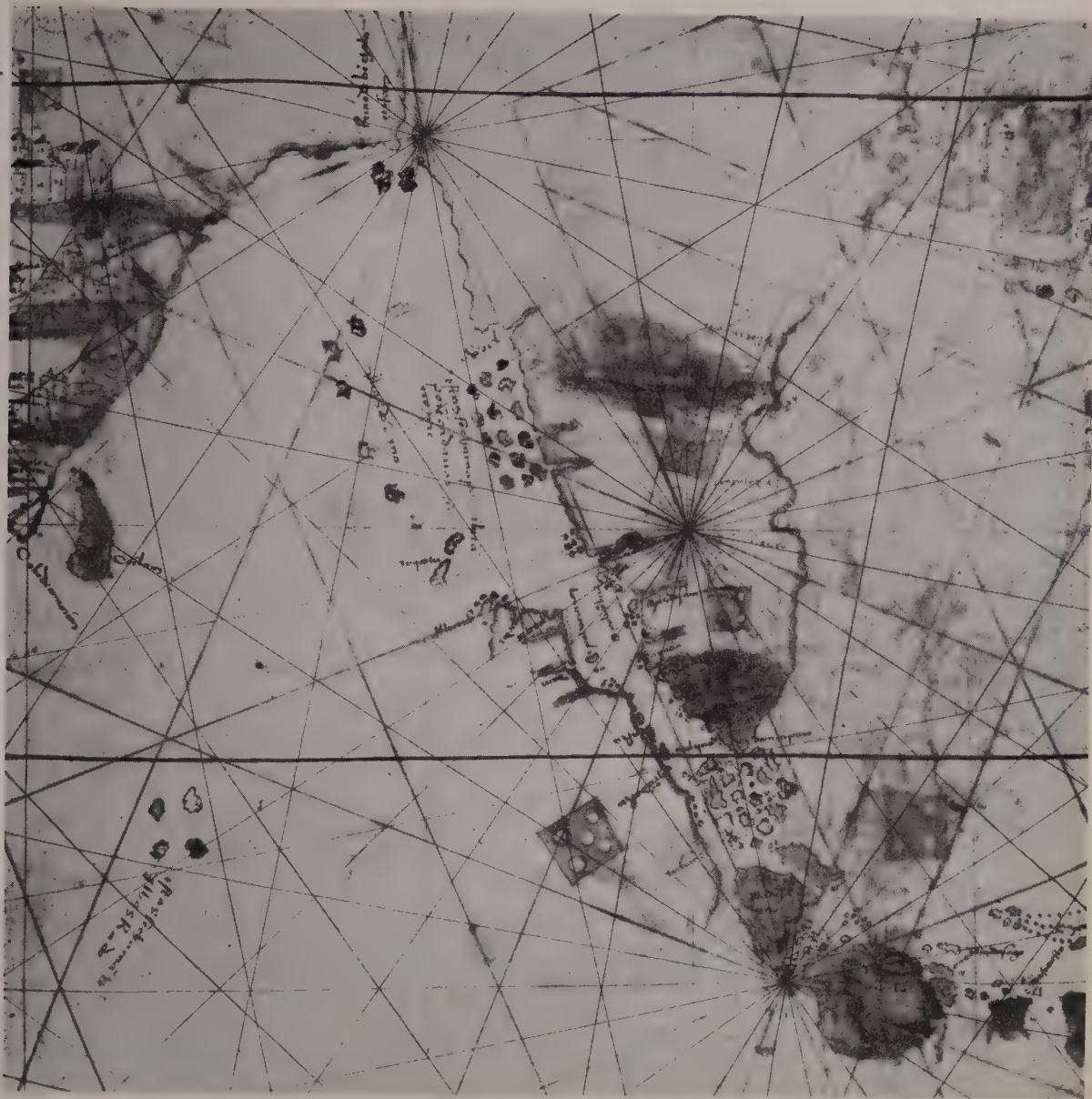


By courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society

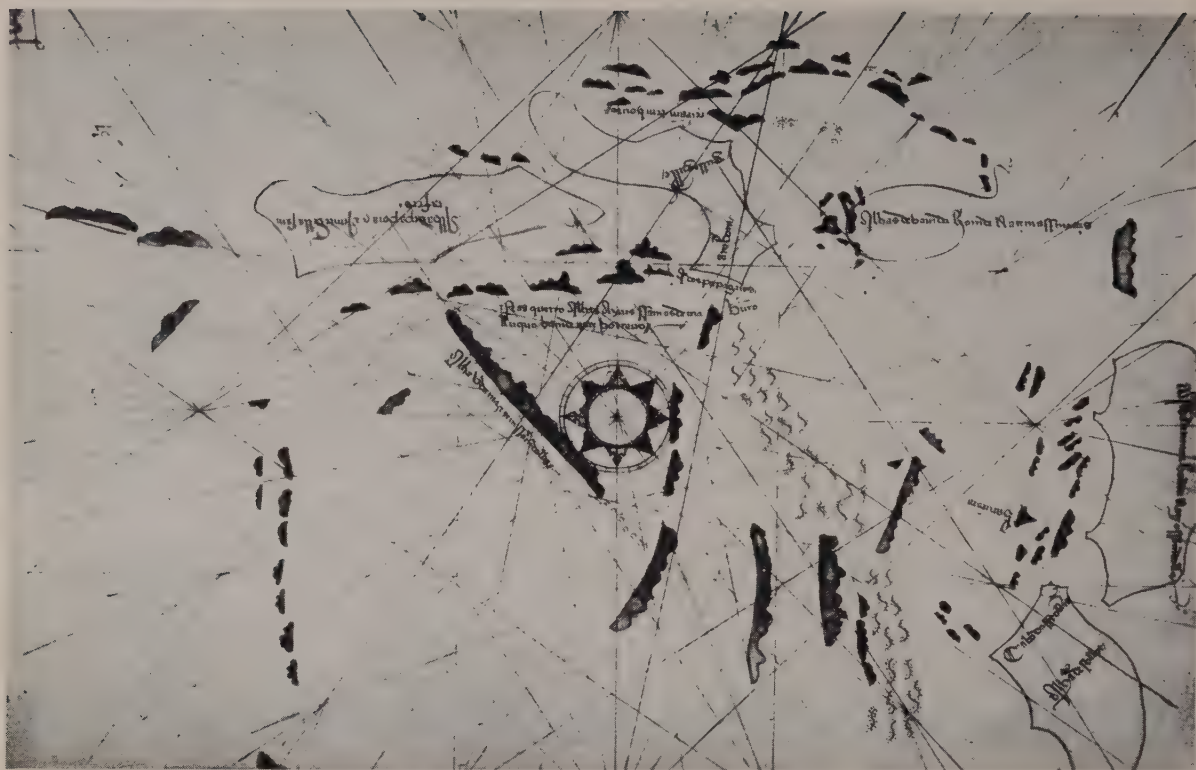


(Fig. 7: above) The Cantino world chart (1502) shows Africa and the Indian Ocean as known to the Portuguese after the voyages of Vasco da Gama (1497–9) and Cabral (1500–1). At the extreme left is the fort of El Mina on the Gold Coast; crosses further south mark padroes set up by earlier expeditions. Portuguese flags on the east coast of Africa denote the ports touched at by Da Gama and Cabral. Comparison with the Ptolemaic outlines in the Henricus Martellus map (Fig. 5) shows a striking improvement in the delineation of Africa and India. South Africa no longer curves to the east; the peninsular form of India is now first suggested, with Ceylon reduced to true proportions and position. (Left) The fort of St George del Mina, as shown on the Cantino chart





(Fig. 8) Part of the Indian Ocean, taken from a chart drawn about 1518, probably by Pedro Reinel, cosmographer to the King of Portugal. The configuration of the Bay of Bengal, which had by now been visited by the Portuguese, and of the Malay Peninsula, is remarkably accurate. The more southerly of the two Portuguese flags in the peninsula marks Malacca; others on Sumatra and further east show Portuguese penetration of the Archipelago, which had by 1512 taken them to the Moluccas







(Fig. 9: opposite, top) MS chart of the Spice Islands drawn by Francisco Rodrigues, who visited them in 1512 in the expedition of Antonio de Abreu. The two large islands in outline are Buru and Ceram, and the legend above the compass rose states that four of the small islands, which are drawn in profile, "are those of Maluco, where the clove grows". The coastal profiles, characteristic of Arabic cartography, suggest that Rodrigues may have had a native chart to copy. (Fig. 10: opposite, bottom) This MS chart, drawn by João Martines of Messina in 1578, shows the Portuguese empire in the East at its zenith, with its pivotal bases (marked by Portuguese flags): Ormuz, Goa, Cananor (north of Calicut) and Malacca. (Fig. 11: above) Portuguese ships and Arab dhows lying off the port of Suk on the north of the island of Socotra. This view is from the MS "rutter of the voyage made by the Portuguese from India to Suez" in 1540-1, written by D. João de Castro, who commanded a galiot in the fleet



(Figs. 12 and 13) Views of Goa and Calicut, published in the city-atlas *Civitates orbis terrarum* (1573). Goa, which was taken by Viceroy Afonso de Albuquerque in 1510, was colonized by—



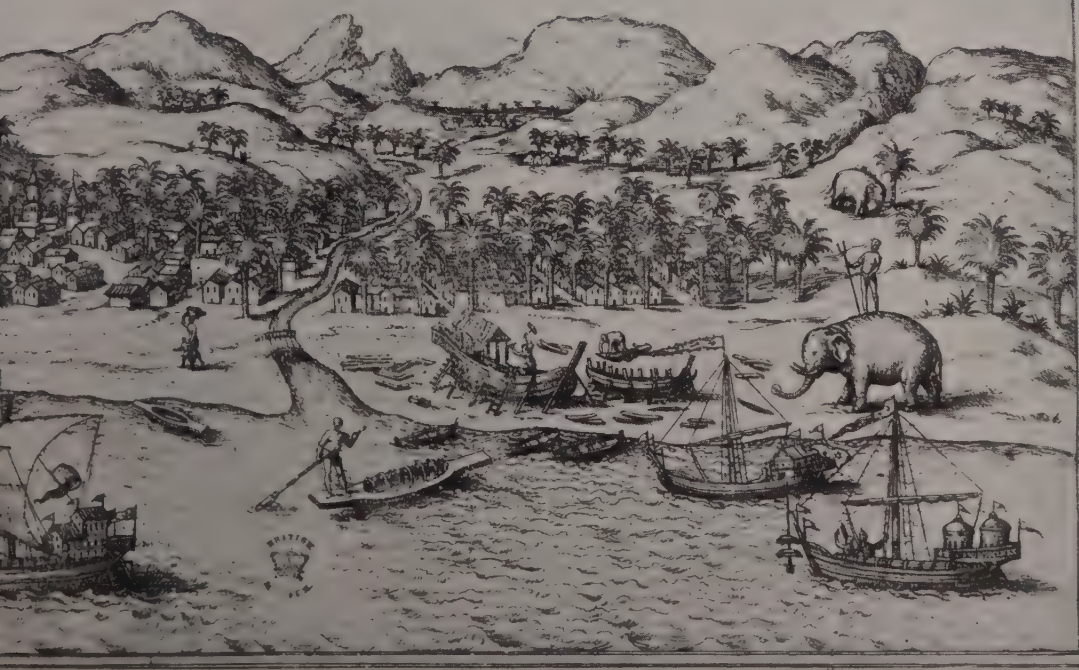


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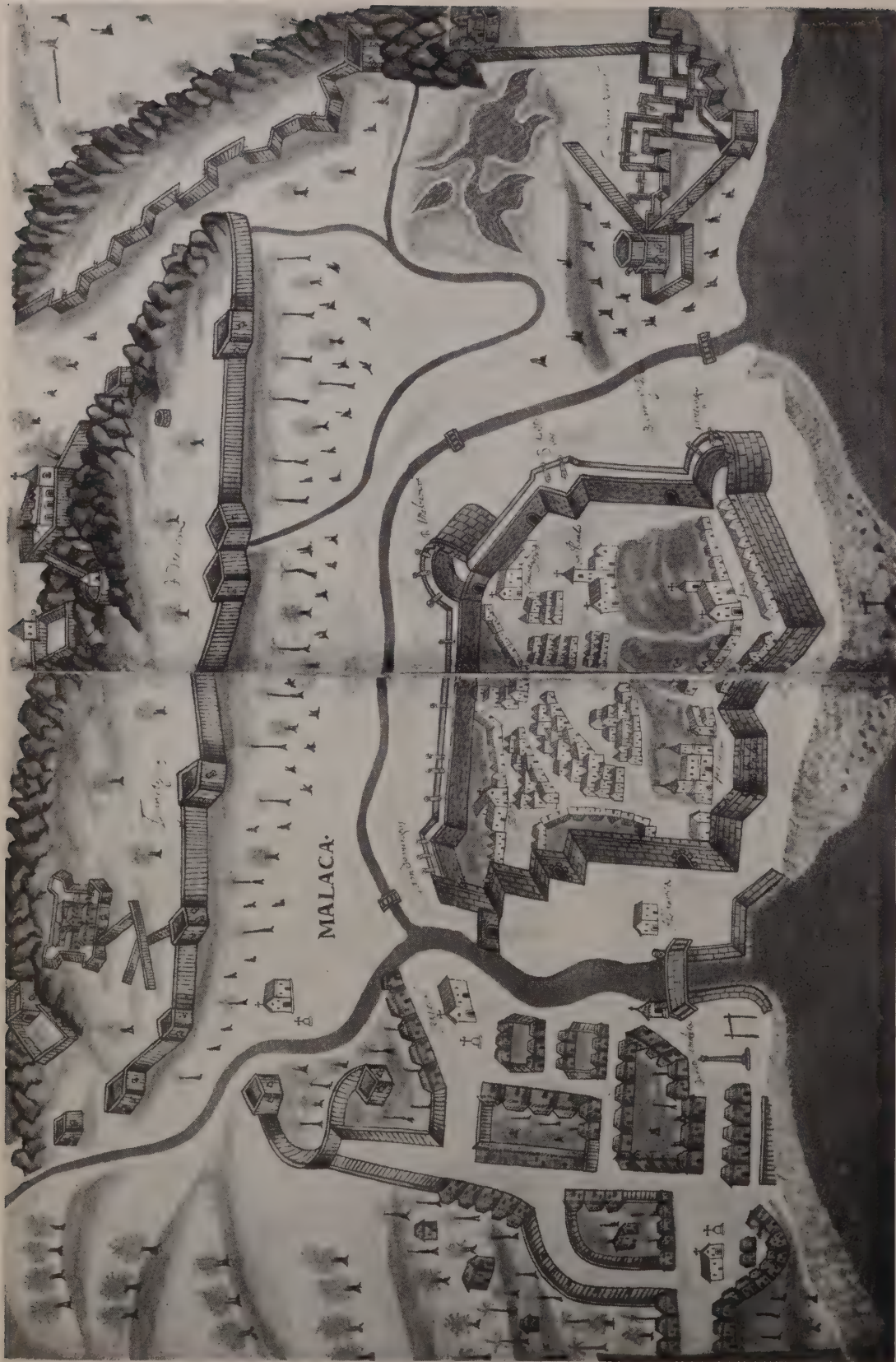


—the Portuguese and became their capital in the East, with the privileges of a city. Calicut, first visited by Pero de Covilhão in 1488, was the principal trading centre in south-west India

ELEBERRI  
EMPORIUM.







(Fig. 14) Malacca, conquered by Albuquerque in 1511, was developed by the Portuguese as a base for their diplomacy and exploration in the Malay Peninsula and the Eastern Archipelago, and as a commercial centre for the control of the spice trade. In this plan of the fortified settlement and port, the numerous churches recall that here in 1545 St Francis Xavier founded the first Christian mission in Malaya. The plan, which accompanies a manuscript completed in 1646, was drawn by Pedro Berthelot a short time before Malacca was taken by the Dutch in 1641



probably never accepted Columbus's belief that he had reached the "Indies"; they succeeded in 1494 in moving the demarcation line between the Spanish and Portuguese spheres 270 leagues further west. In 1498 an expedition was sent to discover "the Western region" under Duarte Pacheco, who may have reached Brazil two years before Cabral. But Pacheco himself (writing in 1505) conceived this "Western region" as "a very large land-mass [i.e. continent]" extending from 70° N to 28½° S and effectively blocking the western route to Asia.

In 1497 Portugal had resumed her eastward advance. The instructions given to Vasco da Gama, based on Covilhão's report, ordered him to reach Calicut, the great spiceemporium on the Malabar coast. After a three-months' voyage in the Atlantic he rounded the Cape, and coasting East Africa he arrived at Calicut in May 1498. A second fleet under Pedro Alvares Cabral, after touching at Brazil, sailed to India in 1500-1.

The world chart smuggled out of Lisbon and sent to Ferrara by Alberto Cantino in 1502 (Fig. 7); depicting the discoveries of Da Gama, Cabral and other Portuguese explorers, is the earliest surviving Portuguese map; and Pedro Reinel (Fig. 8) is the first Portuguese cartographer whose name is known. That no earlier original Portuguese charts have come down to us is principally due to the official policy of secrecy by which the Portuguese authorities sought to deny to foreigners both access to lands discovered for Portugal and information about them. Severe penalties were imposed to protect the Guinea trade from foreign intruders and to withhold charts from general circulation. After Cabral's voyage an Italian agent wrote that "it is impossible to get a chart of this voyage because the King has decreed the death penalty for anyone sending one abroad". It is nevertheless extraordinary that we have none of the many charts drawn for Prince Henry and King John II, nor of those supplied to or brought back by their captains.

The only cartographic record of the Portuguese discoveries before 1500 is to be found in maps which, from the use of Portuguese place-names or of information available only in Portugal, are presumed to be based on Portuguese originals or copied from them. The signature on Bianco's chart of 1448 (Fig. 2) calls him "master of a galley", and he may have sailed in Portuguese ships. Fra Mauro's world-map (Fig. 1), in which Bianco and perhaps also Cadamosto collabor-

ated, was completed for the King of Portugal at Venice in 1459, the year before Prince Henry's death, with the help of Portuguese charts; and a copy was sent to Lisbon. Benincasa's chart of 1468 (Fig. 3) has Portuguese names and reflects the recent discoveries of Cadamosto and Pero da Sintra. That of Soligo (Fig. 4), entitled "Ginea Portugalexe", was plainly copied at Venice from a Portuguese chart drawn after Cão's first voyage.

After the voyages of Da Gama and Cabral the foundations of the Portuguese empire in the East were quickly laid, and King Manoel assumed the style of "Lord of the conquest, navigation and commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India". As his title indicates, this was a commercial empire based on fortified posts and factories which commanded the trade routes of the Indian Ocean and protected them against the Moslems (Figs. 10-14). The capital of the empire was the colony of Goa, conquered by the second Viceroy Afonso de Albuquerque in 1510; and the principal trading centres and fortified bases were Ormuz and Malacca, captured by Albuquerque in 1508 and 1511 respectively. Ormuz commanded the Persian Gulf, and Malacca the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago.

In 1511-12 an expedition under Antonio de Abreu and Francisco Serrão, accompanied by the chart-maker Francisco Rodrigues, reached Java and the Moluccas, or Spice Islands (Fig. 9); and Reinel's chart of about 1519 (Fig. 8) shows increasing Portuguese penetration into the Malay Archipelago. In 1540-1, a fleet sailed up the Red Sea, hitherto closed to the Portuguese, as far as Suez; and this is recorded in the "rutter" of João de Castro, illustrated by charts and views (Fig. 11). Macao, at the mouth of the Canton river, was founded about 1557 as a centre for the China trade.

Portugal's reach however had exceeded her grasp, and by the end of the 16th century her great empire was in decline. Her small military forces in the East were inadequate to defend it against disaffected tributary peoples and against piracy, and the blood of her settlers was diluted by intermarriage with natives. From 1580 to 1640 the Portuguese crown was united with that of Spain; and the first half of the 17th century saw the loss of Portugal's principal strongholds in the East to the English and Dutch. Only Goa, Diu and Macao remained in Portuguese hands; but the empire which had once been ruled from Goa was gone.



# My Worst Journey—IV

by MARIE NOËLE KELLY

*This is the fourth article of a series in which some of our more distinguished contributors place their memorably abhorrent journeys in scales of badness which they have chosen for themselves. Lady Kelly is the wife of Sir David Kelly, British Ambassador in Moscow from 1949 to 1951, and is the author of Turkish Delights, Mirror to Russia and Picture Book of Russia (Country Life)*

It was May 1940. My husband was Minister in Bern, and in our island villa in the middle of the Thunstrasse we listened daily to news of the great German onslaught through Holland, Belgium and the east of France. It is gratifying to claim after the event to have had foresight, but in this instance we did not anticipate the imminent break-through and still less the collapse of organized resistance; so we thought it probable that, in order to get round the Maginot line from the south, the Germans would come through Switzerland. One neutral more or less was a trifle. My husband told me he had the best information that there were twenty-five German divisions massed in the Black Forest area with bridging units, and, sinister detail, a Gestapo division. At some spots on the Swiss frontier the Germans were amusing themselves in shouting across the frontier "*Wir kommen heute Nacht!*"

Of course, we had discussed this possibility before it became a brutal probability, during the phoney war period. We knew that the Swiss planned to move government and army into their central chain of mountains which they called their "National Redoubt" where tunnels and caves had been made and stocked with supplies for many months, leaving the northern valleys practically free for the invader. This meant that Bern, and most of us left in the British Legation, would be expendable; because naturally the Swiss General Staff did not want a lot of "*bouches inutiles*" in their mountain fastness. A skeleton Legation there would have to suffice. Since one of the basic assumptions was that the Allied armies would, though driven back, continue the war as in 1914, our conclusion was a plan to move the majority of the Legation, men, women, children and dogs, in a big convoy up through France to make contact with the British Expeditionary Force, wherever they might be. Financial authorities in London (no longer, in the excitement of the times, "waiting for something to turn down") had cheerfully sanctioned the purchase of second-hand cars and lorries to make up the necessary

transport; chauffeurs, passengers and loads were listed; Legation archives had been burned in the garden! This little bit of history is indispensable background to explain why I undertook my expedition, and why it created in me the greatest anxiety and suspense that I ever experienced on a journey.

Things were at this point when we took an afternoon off to drive to Thun and its still lake. On return my husband was handed a circular news telegram from London, which stated in effect that a German invasion of Switzerland was considered likely. It was only ascertained some days later that this was a rather light-hearted comment, at a low departmental level, on reports sent by the Legation itself. At the moment it did not sound too good, and my husband began talking to me about the possible advantages from the point of view of our children, of my having an aunt married to a retired French cavalry officer who lived in the Charollais country 300 miles away. (It turned out to be 350.) There our family would be sure of a welcome, and if I could put them there it would be much less of a strain on the resources of our eventual convoy, and that much less responsibility for its directors. One assumed not only that the French line would hold somewhere but also that the flight of our convoy would take place along encumbered roads under bombing and probably shell-fire.

Our failure up to the last moment to anticipate the collapse of the French and Belgian armies was natural. The authorities at home could not be expected to risk top-secret military information (if they had it) in a mission abroad, and we hoped that during the phoney war period a great build-up of the Allied resources had been in progress. The pessimism of the French military mission in Bern should have been a warning, but my husband was influenced by his memories of an earlier war; indeed the French Ambassador, M. Alphand, was very angry with his staff for their "despondency and alarm". So we assumed that, though temporary retreats were likely, my



uncle's château would be behind the lines for the duration, and that after our own get-away from Switzerland the children could in due course be evacuated to England.

In half an hour, I decided to drive our sons—age ten and seven—the elderly English butler John Whittington and "Courage" the dog to "Les Coteaux", install them, and return to Bern for the evacuation of the Legation, expected to be necessary within a week or so, in which my services as a chauffeur would be required. The butler was to escort the boys home as soon as feasible. Carried out the next morning when I left for France, this plan, as seen from Bern, appeared sensible: in fact, it proved to be quite the reverse.

Geneva lay by its horn-rimmed lake, so polished as a city, statuesque like a marble Muse whose face is framed by long sculptural curls. The last village was Ferney-Voltaire: somehow it seemed appropriate to be speeded on the way by the sardonic grin of the septic. The Swiss, placid and polite, bowed me out with no comment, but I had a first misgiving when at Collonges on the French frontier only a boy looked out and with a shrug waved us along. "No Customs?" "No, no Customs..." We entered France where

The swift Rhône cleaves his way between  
Heights that appear as lovers who have  
parted . . .

The Rhône seemed to roar a warning in this narrow defile—a thoroughbred between a rider's knees—as it emerged from the dormant lake tumultuous and fierce, throwing itself into France. It was dusty and hot; the villages seemed empty, but the petrol pumps were still manned by women who looked curiously at the children, the large dog, the diplomatic plaque. One woman warned me that nearer Lyon I would need a permit to fill my tank. I wondered . . . having had no indication in Switzerland of scarcity of petrol in France, I tried to buy it in tins; that was no good at all. Fearing trouble I made my way to the town hall at Bellegarde and after a long wait explained my need to an incredulous old man, who asked me why on earth I had left Switzerland, "so calm, so safe"? Seeing my diplomatic papers he bowed to officialdom, and gave me pink petrol slips, enough to get to Lyon. There was no traffic, no cars. The day was fine and scented, but the cloying white dust prickly to the eyes. I looked at the map: yes, there was a network of roads; the whitest seemed to beckon to Lyon and on. I drove with an anxiety born of the growing fatigue, the responsibility of the children, their

tiresome prattle—wanting to stop every hour to give the dog a walk. There was never a man about; only old women with square black straw hats. French villages close their shutters in the noonday sun; in times of peace one senses an even, well-ordered life behind them, but on that hot day I felt a hollowness behind the shutters.

I became more and more unsure of the journey: there was no question of telephoning Bern, under the censorship, to ask for the other news I dreaded.

So on to Lyon to meet the Rhône again, disciplined here under heavy arched bridges. Lyon, hot to the Chevrolet's tyres, but so cold in feeling, the most inhuman town in France. Here more trouble with petrol coupons. I waited long at deserted pumps; but then miraculously a boy or a girl appeared. The car was eyed always curiously, no questions asked, and two gallons given.

To get to Charollais, the wine country, you fork at Lyon and follow the Saône valley. About six o'clock I stopped once more at a cross-road, next to a large farm. The oppressive loneliness of the day seemed to have spent itself, people were running out of the farm pointing at the cross-roads; large cars, some covered with mattresses, lorries full of people and luggage streamed by. What on earth was the matter? I asked an old woman. She looked away as she answered: "*Les réfugiés du Nord!*" Having met no-one all day I realized only too well the meaning of this north-south traffic. This was the beginning of the long exodus, a stream of refugees heading in the opposite direction to myself. The old woman's bleary eyes followed them with a vengeful stare—"They'll eat everything in France" she said in her simple way. And now a new worry: food. We had fed on Swiss sandwiches all day and had tried no inns; was I also going to be short of food . . . in France, the land of plenty? Still, the Chevrolet behaved, and as we stopped at Villefranche I heaved a sigh of relief. Roanne was 77 kilometres away. From there one follows the gentle and placid Loire until Marcigny, my uncle's village. But more shocks were in store, for in Villefranche a siren screamed; no-one took cover, of course, for discipline seemed nil, but danger was in the air. At the end of the long day it was another hurdle to be jumped and explained to the now cross butler, sensing the futility of the expedition.

Late at night we arrived at "Les Coteaux", a charming house overlooking the vineyards. A welcome awaited us, but it was they who asked for news. What did I know of the Ger-



man advance? The newspapers came no more, the radio had to be recharged at the village, the post was non-existent, and no telegrams had come from the north. But with the philosophy of an army family, wise from wars and invasions fought through by grandfathers and uncles, the big house was made ready for guests, for cousins, the uninvited, the refugees. I suddenly realized from their delicate questioning (had I brought gold? jewellery?) that I was a refugee in their eyes. Had I heard from my father and mother in Belgium? For weeks I had not; they had been in the Ardennes that spring, and I wondered where they were, knowing this place in Charollais might well be in their minds too. What was awful was the ignorance of these French relations; the threat to Switzerland was like the moon to them.

The day was done, the children went to bed, and thinking of the next weeks I asked about exchanging money. My uncle was vague; "Let us go to the bank at Marcigny tomorrow," he said. A sleepless night. The anguish of the indecision, the helplessness of the boys, the total lack of news made Bern seem a paradise just lost. There was no way of hearing if Switzerland had been invaded, if the Germans were to descend on Bâle. The journey was a failure, a ghastly mistake; for I realized no-one knew what was happening anywhere, all seemed to be engulfed in little pockets of silence and fear.

The next morning at Marcigny the Crédit Lyonnais Bank opened only for one hour a day. No letters of credit or cheques could be exchanged. I felt then I might be trapped if I waited here too long. The afternoon was long, desultory in itself, but a sense of urgency made everyone look out when cars hooted on the road; one hoped, inhumanly, the refugees would not stop. The peaceful scenery, the measured Burgundian landscape with the gentle slope of the hills across the Loire, the even tempo of an unhurried summer, the long May evening slowly fading through the open windows; all in moving contrast to the doings of men, the shouting on the radio, the appeals of Premiers, the filth of battle!

Piercingly two long hoots sounded at the lodge: we all looked out, then rushed to meet two dirty cars, one with a bulging trailer coming round the bend—"My God, who are they?" said my uncle. The cars stopped. We peered.

The drawn face of my father looked through a broken windscreen; my mother, the chauffeur and his wife spilled out. My sister,

driving the other car, brought the trailer to a standstill. We met and kissed in awed silence.

So to "Les Coteaux" they too had come; not like me, ignorant and hopeful, but with a tale of hideous war which they slowly told in bits and pieces, wise in their fearful knowledge.

Now the puzzle fitted; the framework was shattered, all that could have left through Flanders, pursued by bombs, through burning villages. Defences were down, morale was dead. The next morning, my father, clear-headed and concise, with the dour experience acquired through a week of anguish and danger and flight, showed me on the map the pincer movement of the German armies, and described the horrors they had seen. He and my mother would go no further, but would await in Charollais what fate reserved for them.

Outside, my boys were playing with the dog; for a moment my father looked at them with the far gaze one acquires when one has seen too much. Not saying another word he opened the map again, and with a long pencil measured the shortest road from Marcigny to Bern; it went through Nantua and the Faucille pass. "You can do it in seven hours" was all he said. My mother cried in silence.

The next day I packed my load at dawn, and on deserted roads, praying often, I motored back to Switzerland. Only my diplomatic visa got me petrol, smuggled out of back-yards, where three days earlier one got it from the pumps.

On the journey out I had vaguely felt that something was wrong; now, knowing the situation, I knew I was moving through a vacuum where normal life was suspended—mayors, police, postmen, all the familiar representatives of routine authority stunned by what seemed the end of their world; for no-one counted on British resistance. When I stopped to investigate a false alarm of engine trouble, and two soldiers of sinister appearance, probably deserters, paused to regard us with a nasty look, I wondered for the first time what might happen with a real breakdown—my mechanical competence was zero—on the empty highroad miles from any habitation.

At a café I heard the ghastly news of the Belgian surrender and when, after crossing a completely unguarded French frontier, I telephoned to my husband from the Swiss post office, he told me their resistance was indeed over. So, thank God, was my expedition.